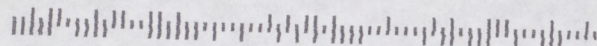


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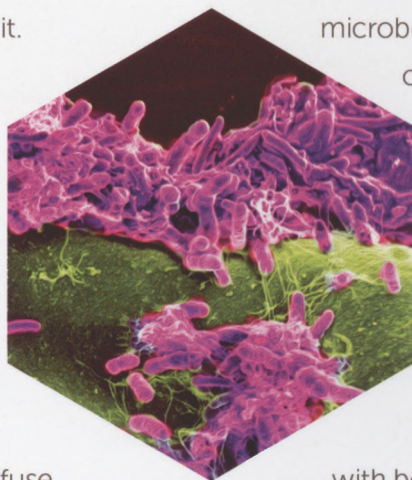
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TURFHEADS TAKEOVER IV

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Producing and sharing impactful content is a key part of any magazine. Establishing a community willing to add zing to printed pages represents the deeper purpose of the one you just opened.

Nothing epitomizes *Golf Course Industry* more than our fourth annual Turfheads Take Over issue. It's one of the few printed magazines – and there are still thousands of them – where a member of a community has an open invitation to contribute an article.

Let's put this in turfgrass management terms. Imagine allowing a golfer to replace you and your assistant during a busy weekend. A career ender, right?

Well, magazines don't wilt as fast as greens. We only get 12 cracks at creating and distributing print content each year, but we're confident enough in this community to allow readers to drive an entire issue. OK, we don't totally go away during this process, although we did spend five fabulous days in the Carolinas last month. We linger on the periphery throughout the creation of Turfheads Take Over, ensuring contributors receive the guidance they need to clearly communicate their story to peers.

More important, we don't meddle. Authenticity matters in an era saturated with filtered messages. We want this issue to feel like you're holding a conversation with each contributor. WARNING: A few contributors push norms. Flip the pages to discover successful methods for handling life and work challenges. You might even notice a few edgy words and phrases along the way.

This has been an authentically awesome year for *Golf Course Industry*, because of a talented internal and external team committed to serving this community. We're inspired by everybody associated with the magazine, especially those who contributed articles to our printed pages. To demonstrate there's always a different way to complete a task, we're publishing their names in reverse alphabetical order:

Rick Woelfel
Ian Williams
Anthony Williams
Matthew Wharton
Brian Vinchesi
Paul Van Buren
John Torsiello
Judd Spicer
Tyler Robb
Todd Quitno
Hal Phillips
Tim Moraghan

Greg Martin
Donovan Maguigan
Tim Liddy
Matt LaWell
Kurt Kleinham
Jason Hollen
Dan Hixson
Ron Furlong
Larry Feller
Dr. Mike Fidanza
Jason Farrell
Dr. John Dempsey

Henry DeLozier
Ryan Cummins
Lee Carr
Terry Buchen
Richard Brown
Jeff Brauer
Monique Bozeman
Trent Bouts
Tyler Bloom
Carlos Arraya
Ian Andrew
Zach Anderson

And, finally, Pat Jones. Earlier this year, we determined “candid,” “caring” and “creative” are the best words to describe *Golf Course Industry*. All three words also describe Pat, whose efforts shaped the vision for an authentic multimedia publication serving golf maintenance professionals. Because of him, we will never underestimate the power of the megaphone. A community, after all, needs to hear the message. **GCI**



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GOLF COURSE INDUSTRY

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THE 2019 GRAINYS

Another year, another ... wait a minute, not so fast. This was a particularly low-fiber year, Grainy-wise. With only limited controversy, the surfaces have been smooth and consistent. But before you settle into complacency, the new decade is just around the corner. What will 2020 have in store? We can't wait. The envelopes please.

BEST COMEDY

Pace of play. What a joke! Or is it a tragedy? Tour officials work "for" the players so they're afraid to drop the hammer when it's obviously called for. (J.B. Holmes, **Bryson** and the entire LPGA Tour.) Do your job, throw some penalty shots around, and in the process let that Tour wannabe dragging his or her ass in front of me know that slow play has consequences.



BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Jack Holt, the longtime (39 years) assistant superintendent at Pebble Beach. My dear friend made all those events I worked at Pebble over the years well worth it. A true gentleman who finally got his due after working 125 professional events. Enjoy the fishing with your faithful companions, Lefty and Charlie.

BEST DOUBLE FEATURE

While we're praising Pebble Beach, it gets the rare double for its

two events in 2019. The Monday playoff in February (Phil, I wanna play now!), then the big return in June for a U.S. Open that worked. Why? Because Pebble's powers that be made it clear to the USGA that the only way they'd host another U.S. Open was to let the course's professional staff do the setup. We're anticipating similar "production" awards for Winged Foot in 2020.

WORST SCRIPT

The Rules of Golf. In trying to dumb down the essence of the game, the confusion only got more confusing. Practice your drops? Same-ball rule? A politically correct name for "hazards?" Did you use a word processor or a shredder?

BEST COSTUME DESIGN

Maybe that should be "barest" costume design. Brooks Koepka wanted to avoid costumes and clothes altogether, posing for *ESPN Magazine's* Body Issue, then revealing his "package" for Halloween. It certainly gives new meaning to the terms implement and balls.

BEST FOREIGN FILM

And probably the happiest moment of the year was Shane Lowry's Open Championship victory. The first Open in Ireland in more than 50 years AND it was won by an Irishman (and nobody cares that he isn't a Northern Irishman). They're probably still celebrating in the local pubs.

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

The Augusta National

Women's Amateur. (Take that, Martha Burk!) In fact, it was a triple play for Augusta: The inaugural Women's Amateur was a home run; the Drive, Chip & Putt Championship continues to be the best junior event going; and, of course, Tiger's win for the ages.



BEST PRODUCTION DESIGN

Bethpage State Park. A tip of the Grainy to the PGA of America and director of agronomy Andrew Wilson. Moving the PGA Championship from the dog days of August to the freshness of spring makes all the difference in the world.

WORST PRODUCTION DESIGN

Mother Nature. Hurricanes, drought, snow, fires, tornadoes. Yes, ma'am, we get it: You're the boss. Kudos if any golfer at your course actually said "thank you" for a job well done in a very demanding year.

SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Steph Curry. The basketball superstar isn't just a golf nut, he's putting his passion to good use, including making a major donation to Howard University to support both a



TIM MORAGHAN, principal, ASPIRE Golf (tmoraghan@aspire-golf.com). Follow Tim's blog, Golf Course Confidential at www.aspire-golf.com/buzz.html or on Twitter @TimMoraghan

men's and women's golf team for six years. Slam dunk!

WORST MAKEUP

We're not sure what's in their makeup that regularly makes Sergio and Bryson — as well as others from time to time — act like petulant, spoiled brats. Unless they're vying for a best acting award, all their moaning, pouting, club slamming and whining should be at least called out — and at most penalized.

WORST SUBTITLES

Hank Haney. Despite his crystal ball being correct about South Korean players, he was wrong to say anything in any language. Four of the five women's majors were won by Koreans, but his suspension — and whatever business he might have lost — was justified.

BEST ACTOR, SILENT FILM

Mike who? The muzzling of the USGA's CEO was as welcome as it was surprising. The award probably should go to whoever on the USGA Executive Committee pushed his mute button. Might it be a group award?

BEST DOCUMENTARY

But also the saddest: Ron

Whitten's *Golf Digest* story about mental health issues among superintendents is required reading. Being able to work outdoors isn't enough to keep our brethren happy and of sound body and mind. The stress our industry puts on the grounds staff is incredible ... and rarely noticed.

BEST ACTRESSES

A tie: Congratulations to Suzy Whaley for assuming the president's role at the PGA of America and to Jan Bel Jan at the American Society of Golf Course Architects. You rule!

WORST CHOREOGRAPHY

Whoever managed the mass "retirement" at the USGA really bungled that push to the exit. Veiled in innuendo, hyperbole and age discrimination, I have to think the big winners will be lawyers. Guess 55 is the new 65?

BEST HISTORICAL DRAMA

Tiger catches Slammin' Sam with 82 tour victories. Kathy Whitworth laughs.

SECOND-BEST HISTORICAL DRAMA

Phil falls out of the top 50 for the first time in 26 years. Who is Tiger going to tell his dad jokes to? On the other hand, it

should give Phil more time to post to his must-watch Phire-side Chats. #PhiresideWithPhil

BEST SOUND EDITING

Cutting Gary McCord and Peter Kostis from CBS broadcasts. Nothing really against either of those guys, but they won't be missed much, and the telecasts will be better with fewer voices talking, talking and talking some more. I don't care about down swings and divots, uphill and downhill grain, let alone how to putt on broccoli. And a warning to the incoming Davis Love III: Get your facts straight before you open your mouth.

WORST TIME-LAPSE PHOTOGRAPHY

The Ryder Cup won't be played until next fall, but the silliness started months ago with tours, press conferences, photo ops, even arguments about who should be on the team and in line for tickets.

THE NOT-SO-GOOD-OF-THE-GAME AWARD

To the PGA Tour for OK'ing on-site gambling. Note: Pete Rose just applied for his Tour card.

WORST SHORT FEATURE

Michelle Wie throws in the towel (but with her bad wrist, it must have really hurt). It will be interesting to see how history judges her career.

BEST PICTURE AND 2019 GRAINY WINNER

Tiger at The Masters.

IN MEMORIAM

Alice Dye, Dan Jenkins, Gene Littler. They don't make them like that anymore. RIP. GCI



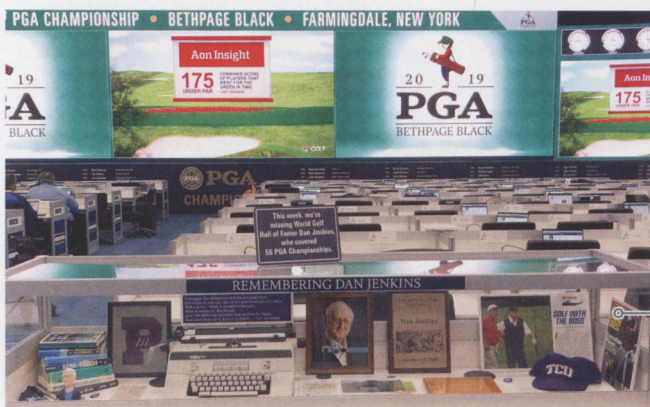
Tartan Talks No. 41

A renovation doesn't work if a superintendent and architect fail to connect. Neither does a multi-person podcast.

For the first time in the 3½-year history of Tartan Talks, a superintendent collaborated with an architect to fill our audiowaves. We visited Cincinnati last month to tour 36-hole Kenwood Country Club, where **Jason Straka** of Fry/Straka Global Golf Course Design is working closely with superintendent **Kent Turner** to improve the club's William Diddel-designed Kendale Course.

After observing work on the irrigation system, greens, bunkers and fairways, we slipped into Turner's office to record the podcast. The pair discussed a variety of topics, including what architects and superintendents seek from each other during a major project.

Visit our Superintendent Radio Network page by entering <http://bit.ly/2QAFbhl> into your web browser to hear the current and the 40 previous Tartan Talks episodes.





OFF TARGET

The other evening, I saw something posted on Twitter by a fellow golf course superintendent I really liked. It was a simple yet informative post with photos attached. I could tell he was “talking” to his membership. He’s the golf course superintendent of a private country club.

After hitting the “like” button, I switched over to DM and dropped him a quick note. I told him I admire the work he’s doing and enjoy his feed. He shares great content and sets a great example for all of us superintendents.

He quickly replied, thanking me for the kind words. What he said next surprised me: he was considering quitting Twitter because on too many occasions he’s received replies from other superintendents or industry colleagues negatively commenting on his posts. The comments mostly question what he’s doing. One individual stated what he was doing was incorrectly and predicted it would most likely fail. He didn’t want his membership to see and read the negative comments about this work and decision-making from industry colleagues, so he deleted the original posts.

I joined the Twitter community six years ago following a conversation with my green committee chairman. With the average age of our membership continuing to get younger, we believed Twitter would be a great way to post course-related information in real time. So, from my outset, the target audience has always been the members at my facility.

Granted, it didn’t take long for folks in the turf world

to find me and my following grew. I have embraced the information sharing and conversation that has ensued. I even compare it to the “World’s Largest Local Association Meeting,” all from the comforts of your sofa.

But occasionally a few folks still get a little overzealous in the proverbial sandbox. I too have received comments or questions at times from colleagues on my posts, and my first thought is, “Really?!” My personal philosophy has always been to “like” replies as a way to acknowledge the person who commented, so if you ever see a reply I failed to “like,” it’s probably because I didn’t appreciate your remarks in the public forum.

A couple of years ago I received a visit from a trusted colleague and friend. We’ve known each other for more than 20 years, meeting at university. He’s a former superintendent absolutely killing it on the sales side for one of the big three equipment distributors. He stopped by to tell me there were some local folks jealous and felt my Twitter posts contained too much bragging.

I promptly thanked him for sharing and told him the next time he encountered those folks

to politely tell them I was sorry, but they are not my target audience. If a fellow superintendent or industry professional sees my post and learns

something from it, or wants to engage and ask questions, that’s great. But the intent of the post is to inform the membership, not my peers.

Don’t get me wrong, it’s fun to engage in banter and sometimes a snarky remark can be funny. Heck, that same former committee chairman told me he thought the interactions of turf professionals on social media was like water cooler chit-chat in the office place. Because we’re out on the course all day, we don’t have the opportunity to walk down the hall and engage in a little banter with a colleague. Twitter affords us that opportunity.

But we need to pay closer attention to both the messenger and the intended audience of the message before we run the risk of embarrassing a peer in front of their owner, board, committee or members. I’ve engaged in numerous private conversations after seeing something on Twitter. I’ve learned a great deal from each of you in six short years, some of which I’ve implemented at my facility.

So, with the holidays fast approaching, I hope we can all agree to be nice to one another, because there is plenty of room in this sandbox for everyone. Just remember to hit “like” and continue to be supportive. And if you really feel someone might be making an error, shoot them a private direct message. I’m sure that person would be happy to learn without the indignity of you being off target. **GCI**

“

I’ve learned a great deal from each of you in six short years, some of which I’ve implemented at my facility.”



MATTHEW WHARTON, CGCS, MG, is the superintendent at Carolina Golf Club in Charlotte, N.C., and President of the Carolinas GCSA. Follow him on Twitter @CGCGreenkeeper.



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FOLDING MULTIPLE PLANS INTO ONE

There's an old saying about plans – more specifically about the lack of a plan: “Without a plan, any path will get you there.” We wholeheartedly agree with that adage, but acknowledge a flip side that raises a question that many diligent planners confront: How to effectively integrate multiple plans into one comprehensive and cohesive plan that guides your overall operation?

The analogy that comes to mind is the challenge facing airlines with thousands of passengers on any given day, each trying to get to his or her destination. The airline has flight plans for hundreds of aircraft and tries to mesh all of those planes and flights into a fairly seamless plan to get you where you want to go. Most days it works, but not without a lot of coordination.

There are three stumbling blocks that derail effective planning efforts: 1) lack of coordination among stakeholders and contributors, 2) poor scheduling and time management for due diligence and preparing materials, and 3) confused or confusing desired results. These three project killers diminish the quality of the overall plan and undermine the credibility of the planning team.

For golf course and facility leaders, the challenge is considering the information gathered through market analysis, financial evaluation and board input alongside the plans of superintendents and those managing food and beverage, membership and financial operations. And then bringing all the information, insights, recommendations and plans together to support the club's or facility's objectives. For managers of each of these functions, the same challenges exist, if only on a smaller scale.

If you're currently in your planning cycle, and charged with pulling discrete plans and input together so the end product doesn't

feel disjointed, consider these five steps:

1. SYNC EVERY PLAN TO THE VISION. No matter which area of the club or facility the plan is focused on, it should clearly map to the overall vision – the club or facility's long-term, forward-looking aspiration, what we like to think of as an organization's North Star. You should be able to see this in the plan's objectives and priorities. With multiple workflows, the project leader must maintain an overall understanding of the project and ensure all plans are headed for the same airport, even if they're taking different runways.

2. OUTLINE SPECIFIC STEPS ALONG THE WAY. Define project milestones, the steps that will help you get there at a predetermined time and those responsible. Schedule regular check-in meetings to make sure all pilots have their planes headed in the same direction. It's much easier to make mid-course corrections than to wait until all planes have landed and plans submitted.

3. DESIGNATE ONE HOLDING PLACE FOR PROJECT INPUTS AND RESEARCH. See that all team members participating in the project planning process have transparent access to information and a full understanding of progress. Lacking a central repository of project

information, important pieces of information can be misplaced, overlooked or lost. This also helps projects from getting siloed and managers feeling isolated.

4. PRIORITIZE WORKFLOW. On expansive projects or ones that involve multiple contributors, establish which components are most critical to the overall project plan. This step enables effective planners to allocate time, financial and human resources. Sequential planning guides the team in accomplishing mission-critical tasks and components.

5. MAXIMIZE PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH CAREFUL SCHEDULING. If a golf course superintendent is preparing an agronomic plan, for example, it is important to make sure each assistant and technical expert is scheduled to deliver information in a timely manner. Stagger the timelines, monitor the cross-disciplinary dependencies, and eliminate duplications and redundant production.

Most managers have broad responsibilities and must combine resources to produce comprehensive and workable plans. Developing a disciplined process for research, input and development is the key to successfully landing all of your plans and making sure they support the same vision and goals. **GCI**



HENRY DELOZIER is a principal in the Global Golf Advisors consultancy. He is currently Chairman of the Board of Directors of Audubon International.

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Jeff Martins

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Greens Mowing
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TIME IN AREA

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YEAR

**DONOVAN MAGUIGAN
SHARES LESSONS
LEARNED DURING
HIS FIRST YEAR AS A
SUPERINTENDENT**

I was standing in Target looking at deodorant when I got the call. It was a brief call, to the point, and over before I could really absorb that it was happening.

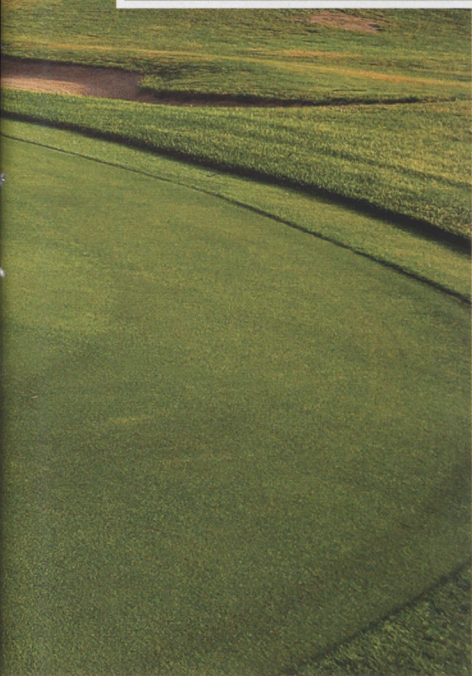
I got the job.

My first emotion was excitement at receiving a superintendent job, which was quickly followed by a quick, somber realization: "Holy s---, I got it." From that moment on, less than 10 seconds after accepting the

job, I was a superintendent and the fun was just about to begin.

All the preparation and experience that led you to the job, through the interview process, and finally securing your job provide a building block to your success. But every property is different with different golfers and different environmental circumstances. To repeat, it is different. Your first year will be a blend of new challenges and moments that will draw upon your past experi-

ences. During my first year, I went through new experiences and familiar moments that I would describe as echoes of what I had been through before. My first year was filled with challenges that tested my anxiety, drew upon almost two decades of experience, and to my surprise, the most fun I have had at work in a long time. Every day, I was invigorated and excited to drive to work, even on the days when my internal anxiety was heightened.



As I approach the end of the year, I'm thinking back on my successes and what tips I would offer another agronomist who is about to make the next big step. These principles may not work for everyone at every facility, but I feel they are key elements that got me through my first year.

ESTABLISH RELATIONSHIPS

Among the core values of this industry are the relationships. They will be part of your bedrock of success within

your golf club, your association and among your peers. Introduce yourself and learn the names of staff members at your club, from the department heads, to the dishwashers, to the front office. When you meet those people again, greet them by name and act professionally. Meet and greet as many players as you can so you are recognizable, especially if you are at a private club. Make sure to introduce yourself before you are asked who you are. Attend club events that work into your schedule, especially big events for which people will expect the best conditions.

On my second day as a superintendent, I played in a member event as a substitute, providing an excellent icebreaker with the membership. If you are new to the region, immediately get involved with your local association, attend events and look for opportunities to interact with your fellow agronomists. Golf and social events hosted by your local GCSAA chapter are great networking opportunities while also providing a short reprieve from the daily grind.

Regarding sales representatives, persistent sales calls and visits can be frustrating when you are busy starting a job, but handle them professionally. My first two weeks in New Jersey were peppered by business

card drop-offs and first meetings with sales reps. For those calls, set guidelines and inform sales representatives what you prefer when scheduling appointments, as opposed to being aggressive or standoffish.

FIND LOCAL TURFGRASS RESOURCES

There are going to be moments when you have more questions than answers for an agronomic problem. You could look up information on Google or ask your peers, but you may need an expert's opinion, so find your closest turfgrass resource whether it's a university or a cooperative extension. These resources can provide localized information on diseases, turf pests, climatology and soil science data. Local turfgrass education sources can also be used for disease diagnosis or soil sampling. Rutgers University is a 25-minute drive and the disease diagnosis can be returned in a few hours. Also support these research facilities by attending field days or by joining a local turfgrass association.

REVIEW PROPERTY CONDITIONS BEFORE YOU START MAKING CHANGES

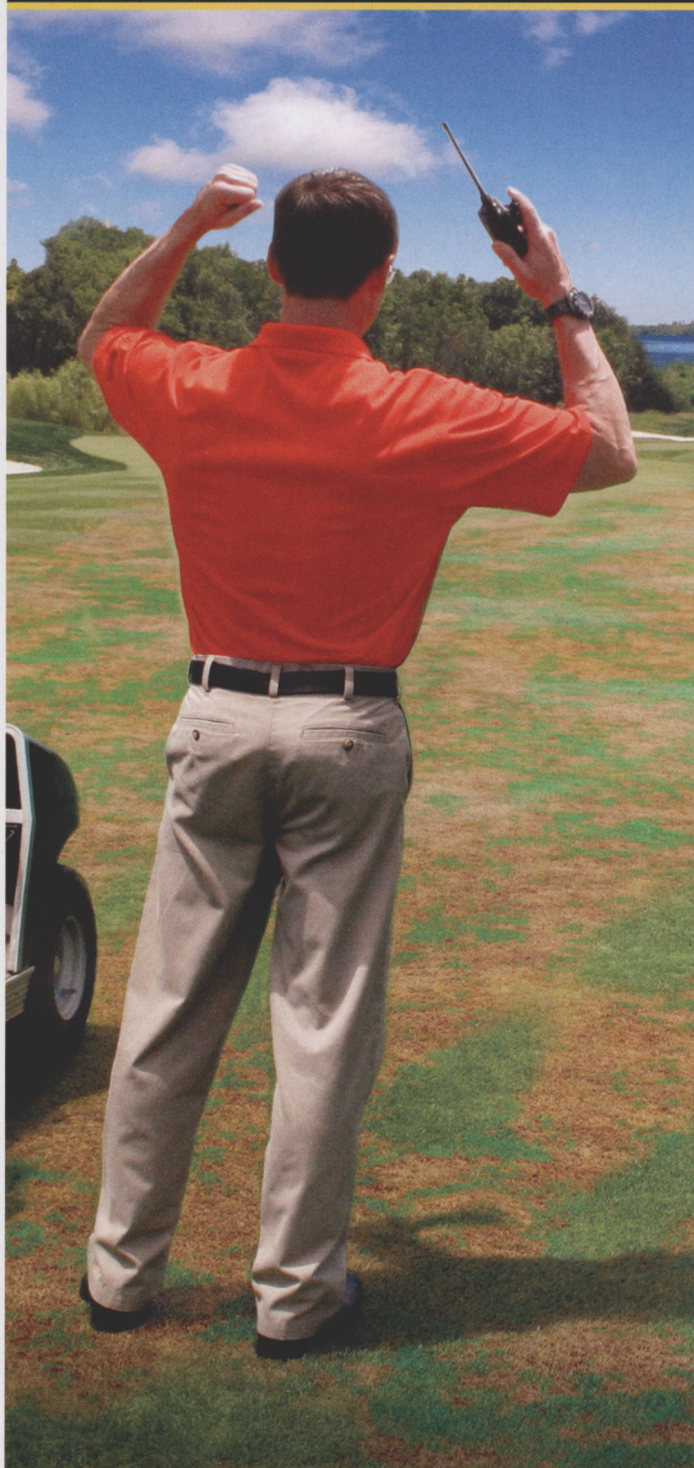
It's easy to walk onto a property, take a deep breath and proclaim, "I'm going to double cut and roll every day, topdress biweekly, deep tine twice a year and mow every playable surface every day with walk mowers." Sounds ambitious. Good luck.

Get out on the golf course and dig around to see exactly what you are working with before you draw broad strokes and potentially make promises you can't keep. You can ride the golf course the first day and take notes on every single detail or idea that you have. Look at it as a wish list with an unlimited budget. With that list in hand, prioritize what you think is accomplishable in certain time frames and update the list as ideas and suggestions come to you.

After you have your list together,

◀ How a new superintendent handles unexpected situations such as a heavy rain event will impact relationships with crew members.

PYTHED OFF?



compile as much data and information as you can. You researched the property before you interviewed, now cut the course open and start to look at the inner workings of it. Take inventory of equipment, chemicals, fertilizer, accessories, buildings, course structures, maps, soil samples, past site visits, disease samples, course photographs, committee meeting notes and application records. If you have been at the property for a while and are inheriting the superintendent position, look at all this information again as if it was the first time.

Ride the golf course, walk the golf course and, most important, play the golf course. It is extremely easy to lose track of what needs to be done on a golf course when you fall into the view of the course exclusively from the seat of your cart or a sprayer. Look at the course from tee to green from a playing perspective by walking the course (if you can). Playing it with your staff, the golf shop or other club staff can present new perspectives and educational opportunities.

COMMUNICATE

Your day-to-day job is going to be a lot easier if you communicate your plan and the anticipated results. Identify the channels of communication your club uses, whether it's a digital platform that includes apps, websites and social media, or analog methods like newsletters. If you are using social media, make sure your content is appropriate for your club and respectful of the position. I have always believed that if you wouldn't want something on the

front page of a newspaper, it shouldn't be on social media.

When communicating with others, make the information accessible and avoid excessively technical descriptions. A complicated agronomic discussion can be very difficult if the vernacular or details are too advanced for your audience. In the same regard, don't water down the conversation to the point where you may sound condescending.

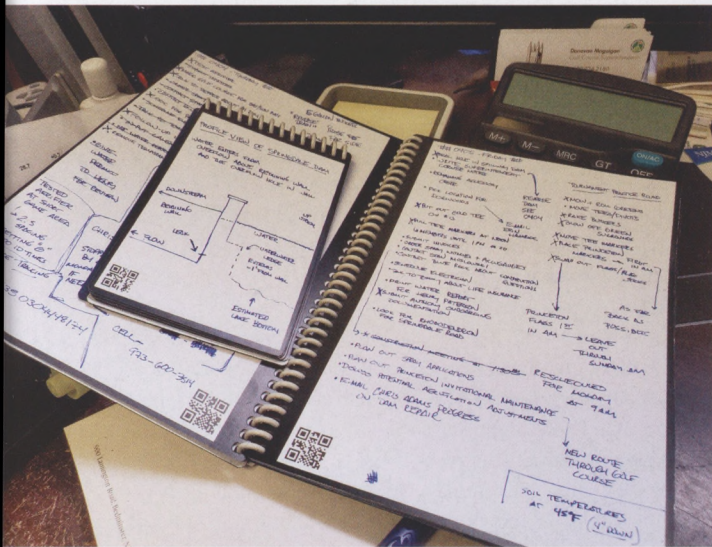
MENTALLY PREPARE YOURSELF FOR MISTAKES AND CHALLENGES

If you think you'll never make a mistake, you're in trouble already. Failure is a part of life and is a critical part of the learning process. The notion that you will never make a mistake, never lose some grass, neglect a beloved rhododendron or accidentally go over budget is a failing mentality.

Failures will happen. The important part is acknowledging and identifying them with a solid communicated plan moving forward. Once again, communicate, communicate, communicate.

Like a politician in a movie or show, the best position to be in is out in front of the narrative. When problems arise or communication starts to decline, it's natural for people to come to their own conclusions and you will fight a losing battle with informing your players about the cause of the problem and the solution. Failing to stay ahead in communication will allow your players, members or even your staff to answer their own questions.

Even if you never make a mistake — congratulations!



▲ Updating a notebook or journal can help a superintendent gather thoughts in the first year of a new job.

— there are going to be inevitable challenges that will test your skill set. Weather, staff issues, changes to laws and Murphy's Law are waiting around the corner to trip up your well-communicated plan. The same principles apply: develop a plan, execute it and communicate.

BUILD UP YOUR STAFF

Your staff is the backbone of your operation and you can't do your job without them, so get to know them. You might be nervous about working with a new staff and the easy part is they are just as nervous as you are. With a new boss, staff will be uneasy about what the future brings. Talk with your staff and take the time to work with them. Your staff has seen different parts of the golf course at a close detail and can provide valuable history that might not be documented. Be careful and take what they say with a grain of salt. Time can sometimes distort facts. If you are moving up within a golf

course that you have been at for a long time, address the changes with your staff but also maintain the working relationship has changed.

You may inevitably find yourself in a position where the staff will have a less than professional viewpoint on their past superintendent or they may start conversations with, "Well, before we used to do this." First rule in this case is to maintain professionalism while stressing that the golf course and the department are moving forward. I told my staff in the first few weeks I was on property that we were going to learn from what was done in the past, but by doing so in a progressive direction. There is no honor in beating down the past superintendent or practices there.

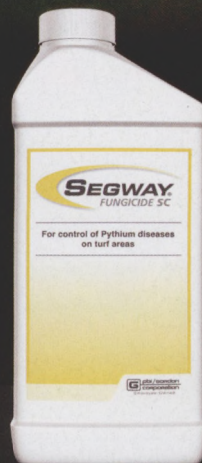
TAKE NOTES AND DOCUMENT

Find a good notebook or use a notes app on your smartphone to keep track of what you are seeing on the golf

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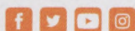
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course on a daily basis. I keep a simple daily log of work completed, observations, short-term tasks and long-term tasks. Each morning, I transfer the uncompleted tasks to the next page or move the tasks to a long-term tasks list. The overload of information when you are working may result in small details falling through the cracks. Staying organized will help prevent that. Even something as simple as documenting the course with your smartphone can help keep you stay organized and on track.

SEE AND BE SEEN

Part of your job requires you to play a visible role on the golf course. Being hands-on and working on the course is a part of it, but there are times when you must play a visible role to your players, especially to a membership at a private club. If you are free, be sure to drive around the property and interact with members while working with your staff.

When you are around players or members, keep yourself clean, wear appropriate clothing and make sure you act professionally. If you are a tobacco user, try your best to quit or abstain from using those products in front of players. I am frequently chewing sunflower seeds, and I consciously avoid spitting shells on greens or walking around the clubhouse with a cheek full of seeds. If you are privileged to be invited to an event at your club in a formal or informal setting, politely abstain from drinking alcohol, engage in conversation and act professionally.

When you are off property, present yourself as a profes-

sional at events or around town as you never know when a player will see you. You are a representative of your club and acting like an ass while you are wearing your club logo can be a bad image for who you work for.

BE PREPARED TO WORK

You really wanted this job, now continue to work just as hard to keep it. Show the people who hired you that you were the right person for the job. Your first year is likely going to be a long slog of tough days, missed nights out with friends or limited time away from the property. Don't neglect your life outside of the course. Find opportunities to recharge yourself. When you return to work, be back at full strength and push hard.

TAKE A STEP BACK

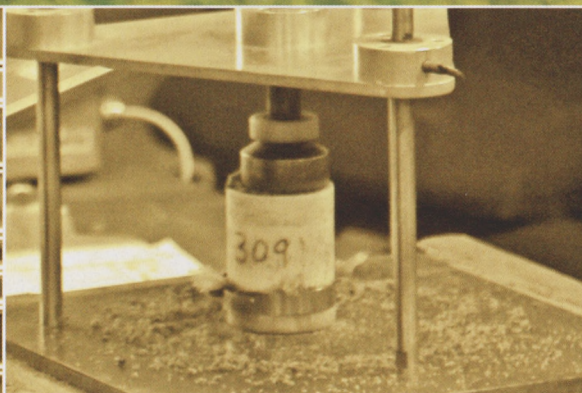
More than once in my career, I have become quickly consumed by the simple minutiae of the job and turning the smallest things into a major issue. It took a supervisor to stand in front of me, point at the golf course, remind me that I was doing a good job, and tell me that all the pressure was internal. It's great to have high standards for yourself and your work, but there is a fine line between working hard for a goal and unattainable perfection. Recognize when you are doing a good job and find the moments to appreciate the work you have done before heading back to the trenches. **GCI**

Donovan Maguigan recently completed his first full year as the superintendent at Springdale Golf Club in Princeton, New Jersey.

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So, you want to work in Florida?

Career plans often change and sometimes you end up in a sunny place. **Tyler Robb** explains how he made the transition to a sun-soaked, golf-rich region.

I was imported to South Florida about four years ago. I grew up in Northern Virginia, attended school at Rutgers and completed a winter internship in Texas. And where did I begin my career? Florida. The Sunshine State was never part of the plan. It just sort of happened.

Attending school in the North, we focused more on cool-season grasses. We covered warm-season grasses in class, although it wasn't with much depth. I remember sitting in classes about warm-season turf and telling myself, "I will never have to use any of this information. This is pointless." A year later, I started working in Florida, where we maintain wall-to-wall Bermudagrass.

My girlfriend, now my fiancée, informed me of a job opening in Palm City, Florida, in 2015. She was scrolling through online job boards, helping me find my next step after I graduated from Rutgers. Her father lived near a golf course that was hiring. She told me to apply – and that I could live with him. I applied for the position, and with some persistence, I received an interview. I flew to Florida and immediately fell in love with the palm trees, warm breeze off the ocean and, most of all, the golf courses.

I landed the job as the assistant superintendent at Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club, a private club in Palm City designed by "Gentleman Joe" Lee in 1984 and then renovated in 2007 by Gene

Bates. The course has a reputation for offering challenging holes while being surrounded by beautiful tropical scenery.

Once I had come onboard, I immediately entered the fire, beginning work in January 2016, the heart of Florida's busy season. Our club has a year-round membership, but most members are snowbirds who live in Florida from mid-October until early May. The job introduced me to new grasses, schedules and cultures of workers. It was great.

Adjusting to the year-round grind presented a new challenge. The slow golf season represents our harder season, as we use the summer to tackle projects and conduct cultural practices. I have personally come to love this time of year.

Fewer rounds of golf allows us to get to the meat and potatoes of our agronomic practices. We scalp, aggressively verticut and aerify wall to wall. I originally thought this would kill the grass and it would have no chance of coming back. But it does recover. In fact, it comes back better and stronger.

After we grind through the summer and early fall, we get into our main season. I learned that it's still a grind, but in a different gear. Instead of putting in long hours in grueling heat, we're now more focused on details. I see it as going from a physical grind in the summer to a more mental grind during the winter into the spring.

Moving to Florida and working with a crew consisting of non-English speaking workers presented another challenge.

We have a few team members who can translate and get my main point across, but there is always information lost in translation. I was fortunate. Crew leaders who speak both languages wanted to help me learn how to communicate better with every member of our staff. Picking up a second language has helped me better lead the crew and build a better bond within our team.

Being part of a team and working together through the heat of the summer and the stresses of seasonal play is how I have learned to handle the year-round grind. You have to take care of the people who take care of the golf course and ultimately our livelihoods. I enjoy going to work each day knowing there is a staff that has my back — and each other's back. There are times I must push the crew to get through tough situations to produce a high-quality product. I also keep in mind that these are the same people who work six and sometimes seven days a week. They are extremely important. They need to rest and relax. Balance is the key.

Making a bold career decision to move to Florida has been great! Living miles from the beach, having the great weather, being surrounded by hundreds of golf courses ... there is a lot to be grateful for here. Having a great golf course with a phenomenal staff makes me proud to be where I am. I couldn't imagine where I would be if I did not take the chance and move to sunny South Florida. **GCI**

TYLER ROBB is an assistant superintendent at Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club in Palm City, Florida.



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Emerald Isle EXPERIENCE

AFTER MORE THAN THREE AND A HALF DECADES ON IRISH GREENS, DR. JOHN DEMPSEY REFLECTS ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THEN AND NOW, SHARING WISDOM FROM A CAREER WELL WORKED.

In June, I parted ways with the golf club I had worked for after 35 years as a greenkeeper and course superintendent. So I thought this would be a good time to look back and put down on paper (well, on a computer screen) some of the experiences and observations of my time on the golf course in particular, and more generally about how things have changed and evolved over the last three and a half decades.

How did I get into the turfgrass business? Well, a friend of mine reckoned this was the advice I received in the early '80s: "Get into grass, John. They pay you to cut it, but it just keeps growing! Job's a good'un son ... and you can make stripes!" The idea of making stripes was at-

tractive for sure, but the real reason I got into turfgrass was more basic: I didn't have a job! My father-in-law was a greenkeeper going back to the 1960s, so that was it. I started on a career path that provided a few lows, many challenges, but outbalancing these were the numerous highs from job satisfaction and the people I met and worked with over the years.

I began my turfgrass career at the Royal Curragh Golf Club, Ireland's oldest golf course and club. Golf was first played there in 1852. The course is established on an open grassland, which has been continuously grazed by sheep since Neolithic times. There are numerous archaeological sites, such as burial rings and raths in the area and within the golf course itself. More recent historical remains

are the trenches that surround the approach to the fifth and sixth fairways. These were dug out in 1915 and '16 during the First World War and used for training recruits before they were sent to the Battle of the Somme.

So, what was golf course maintenance like in Ireland back in the last century? Well, here's a clue: My first encounter with a golf green was when walking onto it for the first time and thinking, "Wow! How nice and soft this is, like walking on a mattress." Oh, dear, aeration and topdressing were not very frequent practices. Turf management operations were basic really, with minimal inputs and maintenance procedures. The greens received the odd run of a pedestrian slitter, once a year — if they were lucky. Topdressing was a screened topsoil, fine clay particles spread over the surface and worked in with birch brushes.

I mentioned low inputs. This was true in most cases except for nitrogen. *Poa* dominated pushup greens in Ireland's climate, receiving 450 Kg/ha of N per year. No wonder they were soft!

Course upkeep consisted mostly of mowing greens. We had a ride-on triplex Toro and a tractor and gang mower to cut the grass and daisies on the fairways. We applied calcium am-

monium nitrate, sulphate of ammonia and ferrous sulphate, and used washing up liquid for dry patches on the greens. Sheep maintained our rough.

By the start of the 1990s, things began to change. We began to educate ourselves, read up on techniques, did greenkeeping courses. We purchased a Cushman and a ride-on fairway mower. We now had some tools, we could aerate regularly and topdress — not with the surface sealing clay/soil, but with washed sand of a correct particle size, and we could start to shape and present fairways. Our nutritional inputs were modified and our greens began to firm up and play well.

As the years rolled through the '90s and into the 21st century, golfer expectations increased. So, the greenkeeper's workload increased. We had to understand the complex requirements of turfgrass nutrients and tailored inputs to the various areas of the course, to suit the surface playability targets and environmental conditions.

New products and maintenance techniques made the biggest impact during this time. For me, the availability of fairway mowers, vertidrains and other aerators, top dressers that replaced shovels, and integrated sprayers rather than tractor-mounted agricultural ones all produced significant impacts during these changing times.

When I started, we had several mainstay fungicides — Iprodione, Chlorothalonil, Carbendazim — which we used through the autumn and winter. These were used to control Fusarium patch, also called *Microdochium nivale*. We had heard of anthracnose, dollar spot, take all and red thread, but these were things we didn't deal with. We had granular fertilizers, no liquids or foliar to speak of and no seed-head suppression or PGRs.

As we moved into the 21st century, there were a lot of new challenges but also many new maintenance procedures and available products. Fertilizer and chemical products have been the source of some of the

greatest changes to course maintenance practices during my time. A wide range of both granular and liquid expanded fertilizers, PGRs, wetting agents and new plant protectant chemistries became available. We now had the equipment and we had the products. We then had to make the correct choices and put together maintenance programs to deliver what the modern golfer wanted. We were transforming from grasscutters to professional turfgrass managers. Playing conditions and presentation improved astronomically. Golfers still wanted more.

We were really getting our act together. Good products (some even had research to support them), good machines, and good education and management practices. But one thing you learn in this business is there are always new challenges. Today we must deal with restrictions of plant protectants, environmental awareness, climate change and — something that has really come to the fore recently — the pressures this lifestyle has on your wellbeing and family life.

We're dealing with chemical restrictions and climate change as we have done with previous challenges. We're adapting, looking to research and education and new and improved methods to overcome them. With plant protectant restrictions for disease control and stress challenges to our turfgrasses, we are turning to a more integrated management approach, learning how all the factors that affect plant health interact and how we can influence these factors. We are now very aware of how our courses are part of the bigger picture and we look to nurture and encourage biodiversity, and to protect our unique environments.

The pressures a turfgrass manager must deal with these days are coming much to the fore in the last couple of years. Effects this lifestyle has on your wellbeing and family life can be devastating. I didn't think I was under stress while working as a su-

perintendent, but when I finished in that position, I quickly realized I was constantly thinking about the job, 24/7. Weather conditions, machine breakdowns, staff problems, dealing with member and committees — all can take their toll. I'm no expert here, but I will say take advice and listen to the many people in the industry who are talking on this subject and deal with it.

What summary can I give after 35 years on the job? Well, when I started, golf courses, certainly here, were mostly greens-orientated, very little attention given to any other areas. Maintenance procedures were basic, little understanding of the science behind turfgrass maintenance, golf club committees knew all and gave the instructions. Things have certainly changed, mostly for the better. Greenkeepers, who were once just grasscutters, are now respected and well educated (some are even doctors ... how did that happen?!). Would I recommend the job to others? Hmmmm. It's not easy, it requires dedication and acceptance of long hours and criticisms from people you know haven't a clue as to what they're talking about. But tremendous satisfaction can also be obtained when you survey your course, everything comes together, and the place is shining.

I had many years in this job, made an awful lot of good friends, and had plenty of job satisfaction. I set myself targets and progressed personally. Advice to young guys going into the business? Keep learning, not only from formal education, but by talking to the old guys. I've met a lot of greenkeepers around the world and their knowledge is always outstanding. There's no end to what you can learn.

And sunscreen. Always wear sunscreen! **GCI**

Dr. John Dempsey is the former course manager at Royal Curragh Golf Club in Kildare County, Ireland. He works today as an independent researcher in turfgrass disease and physiology.

Take more time off

ZACH ANDERSON PONDERES A QUESTION MANY IN THE INDUSTRY ASK: HOW MUCH IS A TURF MANAGER'S TIME WORTH?



My boss encourages me to spend time away from the golf course to enjoy life.

For some of you, this might sound like unfamiliar territory. I know superintendents and assistants who believe if you're not working 6 a.m. to 5 p.m., you don't care about the golf course and you don't have what it takes to succeed. I know this assumption could not be further from the truth.

This article is not about the downside that working tons of overtime on a golf course – and probably most occupations – has on people and families. I am not attempting to underestimate the importance of overtime. I fully understand there is a time and place for everything. As an intern, I wanted as many on-the-job training hours as I could possibly survive. I

once clocked 90 hours in one week getting ready for a PGA tournament. Today, I don't care to spend more than 50 hours a week on the job. My energy and enthusiasm for what I do suffers when I work too much overtime. The objective of this article is to point out methods and policies to help me and my crew sustain energy and enthusiasm in the workplace.

Here are a few ideas that might work at your facilities:

In my current position, everybody works and gets paid for 40 hours a week. If a trustworthy and experienced person must hand water hot spots after typical working hours, that person has the opportunity to come in later than the rest of the crew. For excellent tips on scheduling, check out "The Science of Scheduling" by Bruce Williams in the May 2011 edition of *Golf Course Industry*.

Also, long-tenured and trusted em-

ployees earn the opportunity to manage a weekend shift. I worked on a golf course professionally for 20 years and always had to work one day every weekend or work both days every other weekend. Currently, I rotate weekend manager positions with three other colleagues. Each of us works a weekend then takes the next three in a row off. This has been surprisingly successful for many years at my current club and other clubs in our area are adopting this new trend.

In addition to that, staff members receive a full day's holiday wage on Easter, Memorial Day, July Fourth, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day, but they go home after first assignments. Sometimes, we send the crew home early with a full day's pay on rainy days when the course is too wet to do anything outside. Our crew also gets a one-hour lunch break. They appreci-

Seek clarity ABOUT IT

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance – that principle is contempt prior to investigation."

– Herbert Spencer

I suggest discussing this during the interview process so that it is agreed upon and understood up front. I brought it up when asked if I had any questions about the position and it worked out great. It might not work out great for all situations so be cautious.

Sure, I stay late to finish anything that doesn't get done. That just forces me to become a better manager, constantly testing my ability to get everything done within the scheduled hours.

Remember that time is free, yet it is also PRICELESS. Once it's gone, it's gone forever and cannot be replaced or bought back. So, how much is your time worth?

ate the extra time to play dominoes or rest in air conditioning before heading back out.

Does all this make every employee jump out of bed to get to work? No — that's just me, I think! — but it can increase productivity and morale, and improve service and workmanship while reducing overtime, mistakes, recruitment costs, and interview and training time.

It works for me too. I've managed to sustain energy and enthusiasm at work. My free time begins when the crew leaves for the day. That's when I reflect on the day in the office or take another trip around the property appreciating what we do. Some

of my best ideas come in my free time after the crew has gone home. I do a lot of reading or work on something related to my career (such as writing this article) in my free time before I go home as well. I don't have to do these things for my job; I choose to do them because I have the time, energy and enthusiasm to do them.

Wherever you are, I hope your and your staff's personal time and happiness are important to those you serve. Fully rested, we are in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We don't tire so easily because we aren't burning up foolish energy trying to get everything done in one day.

Some of this can be a paradigm shift. If resistance to this idea occurs, challenge them to think outside the box, look at the bigger picture and see if it will work at your facility. The first goal is to maintain the same level of playing conditions while creating a work environment conducive to maximizing employee efficiency and enjoyment in their work. It may be best to start small, evaluate the new system and if nothing changes go back to the old way.

The size of my paycheck or the nice feeling of being the boss at the best club in town are not enough to keep me enjoying those awesome sunrises every morning. Having ample time to myself to do what I want does. GCI

Zach Anderson is a superintendent at Hollybrook Golf and Tennis Club in Pembroke Pines, Florida.

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▲ Recruiting, training and empowering young employees can help maintenance departments fill labor gaps.

Four years ago, I sat in my office chair at Sparrows Point Country Club posting job ads on websites and Craigslist, banging my head against the wall to find potential staff amid the mid-season golf calendar. Craigslist? Really? We could not facilitate the type of staff to advance our operations, let alone field enough employees to complete elementary maintenance programs.

I did not have the benefit of modern facilities, average pay scale offerings or a pedigreed work environment to fall back on. I battled an aging infrastructure while still dealing with the pressures of delivering a

product for a membership with lofty expectations. However, the labor challenges we face are not discriminate of public, private, resort, high-end or low-end facilities.

In my first two years as a golf course superintendent, I had been through two assistants, two equipment managers and a rotating door of seasonal employees. My pedigree at high-end and world-class golf facilities meant little to nothing as a source of recruitment or motivation.

This was as rugged and uncomfortable of an environment as I had ever been thrown into, and I had two options — quit or solve the problem.

SOLVING THE PROBLEM

While scrambling in the process of restructuring maintenance programs, a guidance counselor from a nearby high school stopped in. He was searching for businesses that would help support a work-study program formed by the Baltimore County Public School system for the 2015-16 school year. I really didn't give the gentleman much time as I knew our "seasonal" team would be diminishing once school returned, and so would my labor budget.

As the season slowed down and I had time to catch my breath, I recognized I needed to spend the 2015 offseason more on staff development than agronomics. We had a core group of millennials and a handful of crafty veterans who I felt could become mentors for this new generation. Embracing the changing workforce would be the first step to address our staffing issues.

I brought on our first work-study student in the late fall of 2015. What did I have to lose? I couldn't muster a consistent pool of candidates, so

anybody — literally, *any body* — would be better than nothing. The guidance counselor provided me a structured curriculum the student needed to follow. At the time, I thought how silly this was to embrace high school students, who had no business operating a \$70,000 rough mower, let alone demonstrating the ability to consistently show up for scheduled work shifts. The well-documented challenges across the industry with millennials was nothing we were immune to.

The work-study program begins in September with a requirement of 10 hours on a weekly basis until the school year ends in May. Like many areas of the country, the golf season is winding down in the late fall with reduced staff sizes. However, I could easily find 10 hours collectively among my staff that could be allocated to one student. Starting small with one student can be a handful enough without the proper protocols and processes in place.

As time progressed with the student, I found a unique aspect within this situation. I could use the student to help facilitate maintenance as needed — leaf cleanup, weekend preparations, bunker maintenance or other entry-level tasks. I created some flexibility that had not existed. His comfort level grew the longer he was with our staff. What seemed like a liability turned into an asset.

I needed to be all in on this journey to create my workforce and work environment. As the months moved on, I leveraged my industry network to educate and interact with our staff with monthly professional development seminars. The hope was to find one or two connections throughout this process to motivate our team and keep them engaged to grow and advance.

I empowered our core group to take the initiative to become leaders, and coach and train the next crop of employees. They had an opportunity to work with this student on a trial basis. As a result, our core group would acquire the skills and confidence needed to grow

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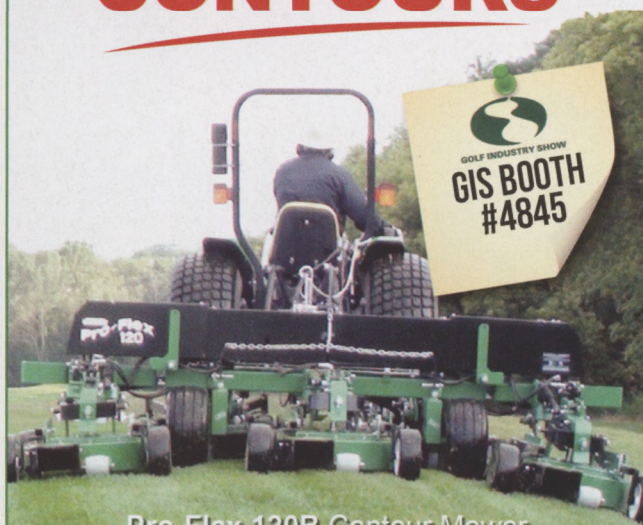
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into more advanced roles.

GROWTH SPURTS

Now, with a core staff becoming more equipped to a team concept and held responsible for improving the work environment, I had the right framework to recruit, attract and develop. As each season passed, our onboarding and training procedures became stronger and more seamless for new employees.

With the help of the guidance counselor, he connected the dots to five other school districts within 10 miles of Sparrows Point. Following each initial meet and greet, I began to find applications coming to my desk on a monthly basis. All with similar credentials and a business card of their respective guidance counselor as an informal stamp of approval.

As our staffing numbers started to increase, it allowed me to improve our hiring processes to attract individuals already in the workforce. Balancing quantity with quality was a good position to be in. I now had the leverage to create a “next man up” culture.

Developing the work-study program provided an opportunity to stay focused on a central purpose — mentorship. Reintroducing this concept would help establish the type of culture I was accustomed to in my early career. Through engagement in the industry over the last few years, I have been able to introduce the game of golf with career opportunities.

As an example, in 2018, one of our work-study students assisted our irrigation specialist throughout the year with repairs and servicing,

then attended a Toro Lynx training seminar while also assisting with snow removal and clubhouse grounds maintenance during the winter months. I took the student on a field trip to Penn State University to meet with the turfgrass department. When the season picked back up, this student became a huge asset to our operation not just with irrigation repairs, but also understanding the entire property and flow of our workday. His success became a benchmark for incoming summer seasonal help, and also challenged our core staff to step up their game.

RESULTS

Our turnover rates in 2014 were over 50 percent with little to no attrition of being connected to Sparrows Point Country Club. Since then, we have seen retention rates climb as high as 87 percent and have had little to no challenge filling roles within our department.

Our high school program went from one intern in 2015 to 10 in 2019. If not for budgetary restrictions, that number would increase. As we have developed relationships within the school community, the guidance counselors have acted as our recruiters. All that time spent in the first two years of the program have now created an endless supply of candidates.

A large percentage of our success can be attributed to working with guidance counselors and establishing relationships with five other school systems in our community. Attending job fairs, participating in mock interviews and engaging with



▲ Irrigation is a specialized task with the potential to generate career interest in golf course maintenance.

students in community events were all critically important.

Many people may wonder if they have the time to engage with the schools to this level. At one job fair alone at Patapsco High School, I spoke with more than 150 students looking for seasonal and summer employment. On average, I spend 15 to 30 minutes each day with our staff on professional development via industry or non-industry channels. This is easily infused in morning meetings or lunch breaks, so I am not taking away from production.

Within our department, we have promoted advancement in many forms — internally and throughout the industry. Earlier this year, a board member recruited one of our fast risers due to the type of development programs implemented at Sparrows Point. In 2017, two former assistants moved on to head roles, one at a respected Maryland golf facility, the other at a Division III university. They were replaced with two ambitious gentlemen who started as high school students in 2013 and 2014 and have gained the technical and professional

skills to advance into assistant roles in our operation.

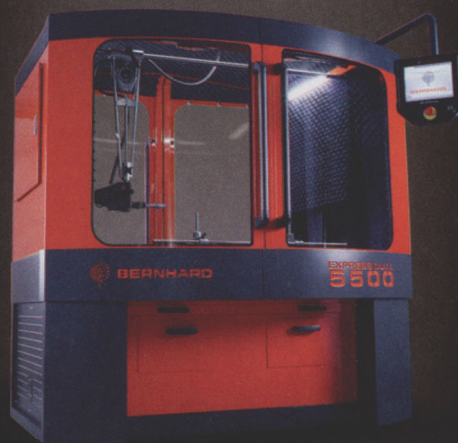
We will become the first golf course in the state of Maryland to begin a formal youth apprenticeship program in 2020. Working with non-industry leaders as part of Baltimore County's Workforce Development Committee, it is mind-blowing how little mentorship and professional development are part of their work cultures. We have a competitive advantage that needs to be shared to bring in quality people.

One of the best results has nothing to do with staff retention or advancement, but diversity. Our team is built with individuals who had no perspective of the game of golf or professional opportunities in the industry. The students who have come into our workplace bring various cultural backgrounds, ethnicities and personalities. It generates a larger purpose than growing grass: creating an environment of teamwork and respect. These were two key principles we lacked five years ago and they were sparked by high school students.



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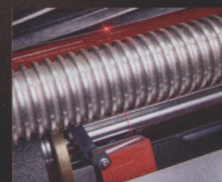


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This all started with the idea to think outside the box, beyond traditional means of staff recruitment and development. Going against the grain, figuratively and literally, has provided a path to endless opportunities to make an impact.

Through trial and error, I recognized a golden opportunity in my own backyard to develop a comprehensive mentorship program to address our immediate issues while also creating a sustainable program. I no longer needed to compete with elite country clubs in Baltimore, D.C. or the Mid-Atlantic, or local businesses. I could embrace the uniqueness of Sparrows Point Country Club and its impact in the



community.

Never in my imagination would the program turn into this type of feeder system. To expect this to work as your primary means of labor would garner false hope. Today's labor market is challenging traditional frameworks and systems. But not embracing the opportunity to grow

from within your community and championing internal development will leave you banging your head against the wall, staring at Craigslist ads in the very near future. **GCI**

Tyler Bloom is the superintendent at Sparrows Point Country Club in Baltimore, Maryland.

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Cold November Rain 2.0

Jason Hollen revisits his 2018 Turfheads Take Over contribution and describes what he learned in 2019.

One year has passed since I actually put the ideas and words jumping around in my head onto paper. And I can honestly say it was a great decision. I'm glad I contributed a piece to the 2018 Turfheads Take Over.

After writing that article, I felt mentally lighter and calmer. That moment of clarity, you often hear about, materialized for me. I received positive feedback from several superintendents and industry colleagues, which was extremely gratifying. Our director of golf even wondered why I didn't say all that months prior. Maybe the summer would have been a bit more palatable. We all have that ability to reach out and connect to others no matter what.

So, after that a-ha moment, you would figure life was going to be rainbows, kittens and unicorns right? (Insert spit-take GIF). The world did not change because I penned an article. The budget did not expand tenfold. The labor challenge did not swing to where we are flush with overqualified applicants. Mother Nature certainly did not take the summer off. Golfer expectations were nowhere close to being in line with the reality of what we do.

So, it seems I'm back to square one and about to ask, "Why do I continue to do this?" again. But this is where the a-ha moment steps in and allows me to rephrase that question. Now it becomes, "What have you learned to be able to continue to do this?"

What did I learn?

We experienced eight weeks of high heat, humidity and no air movement, including one month with record rainfall followed by five weeks of drought. Sound familiar to anyone? Another weather abomination coupled with lost turf and uneducated, unrealistic expectations from golfers. Suddenly, it was 2018 again. But there was one difference ... me. My reaction was a complete 180 degrees from previous seasons.

The mental health of my crew and I were the top priority. The season was once again a gauntlet of challenges (weather, labor, resources), but I would venture to say it was one of the best we have had in recent memory. Don't get me wrong, there were the aforementioned challenges, but they never became an anchor around our necks. The challenges became opportunities. Opportunities to try new management techniques, educate crew members and find new ways to connect and reach people.

So, anything else learned?

Did I learn about turf? Sure did. Once again, I learned bentgrass does not like hot and humid weather with no air movement. Been there, done that.

I learned about people. For instance, golfers can say they are "down with brown" and want fast and firm. (Spoiler: they don't). They want fast and firm, as long as it is green. And expectation levels are all over the place. As superintendents, we strive for consistency in a non-consistent environment.

It seems many golfers desire that consistency too, but they forget about the non-consistent element. The group who understands the variables we go through is very minute.

I learned about people.

Sometimes cross-training every employee is not the way to go. Because of limited labor, identifying strengths of team members and utilizing their talents was a shift in philosophy this year. It worked out well.


I learned about people. Be consistent with your team expectations. It may irritate some team members, but they will get over it. I had two experienced team members depart our staff this year. It was tough, but it had to be done with no exceptions.

I learned about people. Not all people you deal with share your passion. It's probably the most difficult lesson to learn. The ability to communicate with them can be a struggle, but the ability to accomplish that communication can open up worlds. (Secret: That is a work in progress).

Again, what did I learn?

Sounds cliché, but the truth is I learned that the only thing you can control is you. A lesson I was taught years ago, but sometimes needs to be refreshed every so often. Take care of yourself. Be it meditation, therapy, exercise, reaching out to others, being involved in something bigger than you, time with friends and loved ones. Whatever it may be, make it a priority. And one year later, hopefully you thank yourself. **GCI**

JASON HOLLEN is golf course and grounds superintendent at Stonewall Resort in Roanoke, West Virginia.



10 things assistant superintendents SEEK in a BOSS

HOW CAN A LESSON FROM *GREY'S ANATOMY* HELP A SUPERINTENDENT RECRUIT A TRUSTED CONFIDANT? **RICHARD BROWN** EXPLAINS HIRING FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.

reached out to 10 assistant superintendent friends of mine: nine from across the country and one fuzzy, little foreigner. I asked them all the same question: *What do you look for in a superintendent?*

I took their responses, examined them and devised 10 themes to summarize what today's assistant is looking for in a boss. Before anyone tweets at me to inform me that not everyone has the luxury to even have an assistant, much less be able to provide some of these experiences, I know. Some clubs have better benefits than others and I will confess I'm very fortunate to work for the club I do and to be provided the opportunities that come with that. If you happen to be looking for an assistant — and it seems like everyone is nowadays — take these 10 points to help you attract your next turfgrass protégé.

1. PERSONALITY

Obvious, I know. But your personality affects how people view you and that has a direct correlation with the talent you attract to your club. It's more than just being a cool boss. It's important to be open-minded and have a sense of humor. How a superintendent speaks to their crew and how they handle situations with members all factor in. How do you handle adversity? Assistants want to see a superintendent who's level-headed and keeps their composure in all situations. We look up to you. If we see you blow your top because a sand delivery is a half-hour late, we learn to react that way rather than regroup, reassess and appropriately respond to the situation.

2. TEACH AND EDUCATE

Ever watch *Grey's Anatomy*? It's OK. You can raise your hand. My wife loves it and, quite honestly, so do I. On the show, Grey Sloan Memorial is known as a "Teaching Hospital." There's always an intern standing in the background listening, learning,

and trying to process all the information coming their way. Assistants resemble those timid interns. We have high hopes and aspirations, but we need a Dr. Richard Webber in our lives. Webber, the seasoned muse whom everyone admires, always makes a point to inspire confidence in the young doctors who work underneath him.

That is something assistants are looking for. A superintendent who is going to invest time in us, simplify and explain things so one day we can take over a course of our own. Teach. Educate. Spread your knowledge. The younger generation needs it and appreciates it.

3. CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Today's assistant wants to be a professional and we look for a leader who can help us grow into that role. Here are a few examples of what we look for in a superintendent who will develop us:

Overall Brand. Who are you? Where have you been? What have you done? These days the name of the golf course isn't necessarily the main thing that attracts assistants. In a lot of cases, we're just as likely to choose to work for a superintendent rather than the golf course they manage. Presence on social media, exposure from articles or publications, or just being well known in the area for being a solid superintendent all play into how well connected you are to the younger generation.

Products. Have you ever been in an association meeting when they hand out one of those lifetime achievement awards? Any time it's a former superintendent, at some point someone says, "If you have worked for this person please stand" and a quarter of the room stands up. You have to admire the large number of turf managers who worked under the seasoned veteran, all the lives and careers that have been touched. That's an exaggerated example, but it fits, I

promise. As assistants we see that and carry that with us. For our next job, we're more likely to look into who the prospective superintendent has produced. Who has worked for you? And would they stand at your awards ceremony?

Patience. Everyone's different with how they work, learn and grow. Give your assistants time to grasp all the practices and concepts that may be new to him or her. You've been doing this for a lot longer than us. Keep that in mind. And in regard to past assistants, just because your last one picked up on spraying greens in a week doesn't mean your next assistant will. Give them time to learn at their own pace.

4. EXTRACURRICULARS

This is the fun stuff, the things that keep you motivated and on fire for the turf game. I'm talking volunteering, association events, conferences and shows. I will never forget my first Carolinas GCSA Conference and Show. A bright glare from the fluorescent bulbs bounced off the new equipment as I strolled up and down the aisles, grabbing everything free in my path. Everyone was laughing, talking turf and just plain having fun. I was blown away. That feeling was multiplied this past year when I was fortunate enough to attend my first Golf Industry Show. My current superintendent knows one way to keep assistants passionate about the industry is to let us do these things. With regards to volunteering, not only does he allow us to take a week off to go volunteer for a tournament, but he strongly encourages it. He understands the value in these extracurriculars. Not just for our professional development, but also for



These days the name of the golf course isn't necessarily the main thing that attracts assistants. In a lot of cases, we're just as likely to choose to work for a superintendent rather than the golf course they manage."

the golf course he provides to his membership.

5. CULTURE

I use culture here, but work environment could work as well. "Creating a culture" is just a fancy way of saying "make the work environment enjoyable as possible." While prior generations seemed to replace labor almost effortlessly, today's assistant realizes the value of making the workplace somewhere employees want to work — and in some cases, even enjoy. We know crew members are the foundation and driving force of the operation. Keeping your crew satisfied, motivated and continually working to the common goal makes the assistant's life a lot easier.

6. INVOLVE

Assistant superintendents want to be a part of the whole shebang. From running the crew day-to-day, to planning future projects, all the way to budgeting. They want to feel like they are an integral part of the club. Take your assistant on your morning rounds and discuss what you look for and what you're seeing. Sit them down and let them help with EOPs. We want to know our thoughts and ideas are at least heard and considered. Involve your assistant in the entire process of running the course.

7. CHALLENGE

There is an old saying (or maybe I just made it up) that's summarized as, "You'll never learn if you're always given the answer." When faced with a problem, question your assistant to help pound your lesson home. It can be as basic as "What do you think?" or "What would you do here?" Then use that time to teach and educate. Want to take it a step further? Encourage your assistant to take the time to diagnose the problem, then challenge them to fix it themselves.

8. FREEDOM

Freedom!!! (Insert Mel Gibson meme here) But seriously ... Truth be told, I probably could have fit freedom in with the "Challenge" section, but the term "Freedom" came up too many times to not explain what I think these assistants meant. Easy, OK? I don't mean you should be lackadaisical with your assistants and let them run amok on the course. I think this is more of an anti-micromanaging type deal. If you're constantly telling your assistant what to do, or calling every 10 minutes on your weekend off, we feel you don't trust us. And if you can't trust us to be able to handle everything while you're off property, what's the point of having an assistant? Give your assistant

the freedom to make some calls on their own.

9. INTERACTION

Very similar to "involve," but was mentioned enough to warrant its own section. Assistants want to be allowed to interact with the members, club personnel and industry sales. They want that face-to-face time, the ability to shake hands and learn how to deal with people in this business. Allow your assistant to join you in decision-making meetings. Let them listen to sales representatives and their pitch when they come by. Assistants need this type of interaction to learn how to handle ourselves when we're in those situations as superintendents.

10. RELATIONSHIP

This is a big one, especially for me. This is something I've looked for from my superintendent throughout my entire career. This goes a little past just feeling like my superintendent likes me. I'm not asking to be best friends, nor am I looking for a father figure. But I've also wanted a RELATIONSHIP with my boss. We want to feel like you care for us the person as much as the employee. Know who your assistant is personally as much as you do professionally.

My old boss had his quirks. He always seemed pissed, busy and sarcastic, but he also always stopped and talked with me and made a point to check on how I was doing. Bossman was old-fashioned and even though he had a weird way of doing it, he always made me feel as though he cared about my success on and off the course.

I no longer work for him, but even now we maintain a relationship and that has always stuck with me. Dude was at my wedding (and he got me a fancy coffeemaker). **GCI**

Richard Brown is the assistant superintendent at Orangeburg Country Club in Orangeburg, South Carolina.

CREDITS

Here's the updated list of people who helped with this article. A few have moved to different jobs since helping create this list.

William Brooks, AGCS	The Country Club of Birmingham
Chandler Green, AGCS	Wyndham Lancaster Resort
Scott O'Brien, AGCS	Avila Golf & Country Club
Jimmy Pierson, GCS	Long Island National Golf Club
Adam Wiles, AGCS	Royal Melbourne Country Club
Ken Williams, AGCS	Man O' War Golf Club
Conrad Pannkuk, AGCS	The Club at Wynstone
Seth Holland, AGCS	The Hasentree Club
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Talk and walk it out

Golf course architect **Ian Andrew** describes how he developed the support and tactics he needed to control bouts with anxiety.

Iknew something was wrong around the age of 18. I could no longer sleep properly. I had constant panic attacks that I could not explain, understand or control.

When my work as a golf course architect began to involve long distance driving and frequent flights, the panic attacks became more frequent and I could no longer sleep the night before I had to travel. What I didn't know was my inability to get a night's sleep was adding fuel to my anxiety.

In the morning, sleep deprived, I would get up, force myself out the door, full of anxiety and begin the drive to the airport or out to a golf course. Often, I would have to stop and get out of the car and walk on the side of the road because I was hyperventilating so hard my arms were numb, my chest hurt, and I could barely breathe. I kept this secret from everyone, but my wife knew something was wrong. I began to spiral, and we sought professional help.

It started with a visit to my family doctor. Through her I saw my first psychiatrist, who proved helpful with determining the trigger for the anxiety — a nasty car accident when I was young. His recommendation was to take anti-depressants, which was not the right answer for me. While it muted my anxiety, I also became distant. I decided that I preferred dealing with the anxiety. Even with anxiety, I could still get my work done. I continued to carry a heavy load at work, but I was also beginning to feel depressed that I

could not solve this issue. I had to address this problem.

We asked the family doctor for other ideas and she pointed us in the direction of cognitive therapy. After some sessions with another psychiatrist, I gained the coping mechanisms to deal with a panic attack. Picture me in the car in the middle of a full panic attack, studiously filling out a page of questions from "Mind Over Mood." The workbook asked questions designed to identify what was running through your mind, which then gave you the tools to begin to rationalize yourself down. This helped a lot and I was able to regain control more quickly. Over time, I knew the questions so well I could do this exercise in my head. Sleep remained an issue and I was often fatigued.

This was about when I began to share my personal issues with a few key people I worked with on construction sites. The most common answer I got was, "I never would have guessed you have anxiety." I had developed a habit of walking everywhere on golf course construction sites. I found it allowed me to see things more clearly by going more slowly through the landscape, but it also helped me quell some anxious feelings that during a visit. When I explained my reasoning to some superintendents I knew well, I found myself with lots of unexpected support. Soon all visits began with "Let's walk. Ian likes to walk."

The cognitive therapy helped, but my wife kept pushing me to try new ideas. I had

resigned myself to this being a part of my life. She persisted, though, and we tried eliminating caffeine (ugh), changing eating habits, aroma therapy (wtf), white noise at night, audio books and even yoga (zzzz). When I began my own business, we instituted some changes that brought positive results. Flying in the night before was better than flying out at 6 a.m. It cost me money for the hotel, but I felt better and that was worth the price. I made sure there were gaps in travel or a day of leisure added to a long multi-city trip. But the real breakthrough came with when my wife read an article about walking long distances to release endorphins.

I can't explain why this works, but for me it really does. We determined that I require around a three-mile walk to release what's inside I need. I also require a solid night's sleep. This was a game-changer, because I noticed a dramatic decrease in daily anxiety and a massive drop in the frequency of my panic attacks. I didn't have to go out every night, but I do walk before and during major trips. It most often involves an extra lap of the project I'm working on before I head to the hotel. Evening golf works too.

I'm grateful to those who have come out and talked openly about what they go through in the golf business. They are the strong ones. I decided to write this article to show support for them, but hopefully to encourage someone else to seek professional help and find their own support system. **GCI**

IAN ANDREW is a Brantford, Ontario-based golf course architect who works throughout Canada and the United States.



It's OK TO SEEK HELP

**RYAN CUMMINS DESCRIBES HOW LEANING
ON A MENTOR CAN BE A SIGN OF STRENGTH
DURING TRYING PERIODS.**

TZ.

But after a few years of looking at them each day, I have realized their importance in my life and my journey as a father, a husband and a golf course superintendent.

The initials stand for Tom Zimmerman. Born and raised in Elkhart County, Indiana and a Vietnam veteran who proudly served his country, Tom began his career in golf course maintenance as an assistant to Bert Rost at the course that I care for now, Elcona Country Club. He took over for Bert in 1974 and served Elcona and its membership for 30 years. Every acre of its property has Tom's fingerprint and vision on it.

After receiving my turf degree from Purdue in 2005, I was fortunate to be hired at Elcona as an assistant superintendent. I'll admit, I was overwhelmed for a while. It was a bit different than the experiences I had working at the Purdue golf courses. Tom would drop in for coffee or to check on a project we would be working on and one day he pulled me aside. I guess he noticed my timidity with staff and the tasks at hand. After exchanging pleasantries, he simply asked how the new job was going. After trying to hide my inexperience,

Each morning when I arrive at work and each night when I leave, I look at those two letters imprinted in the concrete walkway beside the shop door. I'll get to the reason why I stare down twice a day at a random etching momentarily.

I was honest in how my life was going in this new journey. He simply told me, "Your focus should simply be making the course a little better than how you found it when you came in. The rest will come with time." After chewing on that simplistic view on what I was doing, things came easier for me. I figured out then that he should stay in my contact list.

Fast forward to 2017. I had just had probably one of my toughest years as a turf professional. 2016 had brought some of the nastiest weather I had seen for growing grass, an employee stuck his hand in a moving reel that he never reported as malfunctioning, and I lost most of what little bentgrass I had on greens to Pythium. The last half of the year, I was truly hurting for my best friend in the business who I saw quickly losing his passion to be around the club that brought our two paths together. Trying too hard to help him and be a friend took passion away from me as well.

2018 was more of the same weather and people issues and, to be honest, I was wondering what I was doing to support my wife and kids in this world. It was noticeable to my wife and she kept asking me to go talk with someone. I kept ignoring her requests like a thick-headed male always does. "I'm good," I kept telling myself, just a bad stretch of events. We had begun plans to renovate our bunkers at the club and I had set up a lunch with Tom to get his opinion on what we were thinking and how to sell it to our membership.

After 15 minutes talking sand and shaping in that small Bristol cafe, I think he could see the frustration and worry in my eyes. Again, he asked simply, "How's life going? You doing OK?" Those words, in that calming voice, for whatever reason allowed me to let my guard down and get everything off my shoulders. The insecurity and doubt in my ability to do the job anymore. The long hours away from the three people who I truly loved in this world. How I seemed like I had no time for any of my friends or hobbies. How it seemed like very few people in Elkhart County wanted to work hard, have attention to detail and perform quality work for an honest wage. The lack of a clear vision on what my future looked like in five years.

When weather came up, his advice was to embrace the worst that summer brought. "I relished summer because it gave me the opportunity to truly demonstrate my abilities," he said. "If the course was in great shape during the worst of weather, members definitely noticed that they had the right person at the helm." Talk of family and how he delegated tasks to allow for more time at home was another great 45 minutes of discussion. While he was honest in saying today's standards are more extreme than when he was a superintendent, in the end, we are both in

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TOURHEADS TAKE OVER



the same boat. When we left to head our separate ways, he left me with one final piece of advice: "Above all else, listen to your wife. You're doing great and the course has never been better. I'm around if you need me."

Those three hours in a small-town Indiana cafe truly saved me from leaving the industry I love so much. True, the '80s and '90s were totally different than today in terms of golfer expectations. I still chuckle each time he mentions the HOC he maintained our "fast" greens at Elcona when he started in 1974. He laughs when mentioning that bunker design in the '70s was to collect every drop of water from the fairways to maintain their integrity of the turf. But each time I look down at the old concrete path next to the door at the shop, I am reminded of the simple, yet highly effective advice he gave — and continues to give each time I see him at the club or out at lunch in our small community.

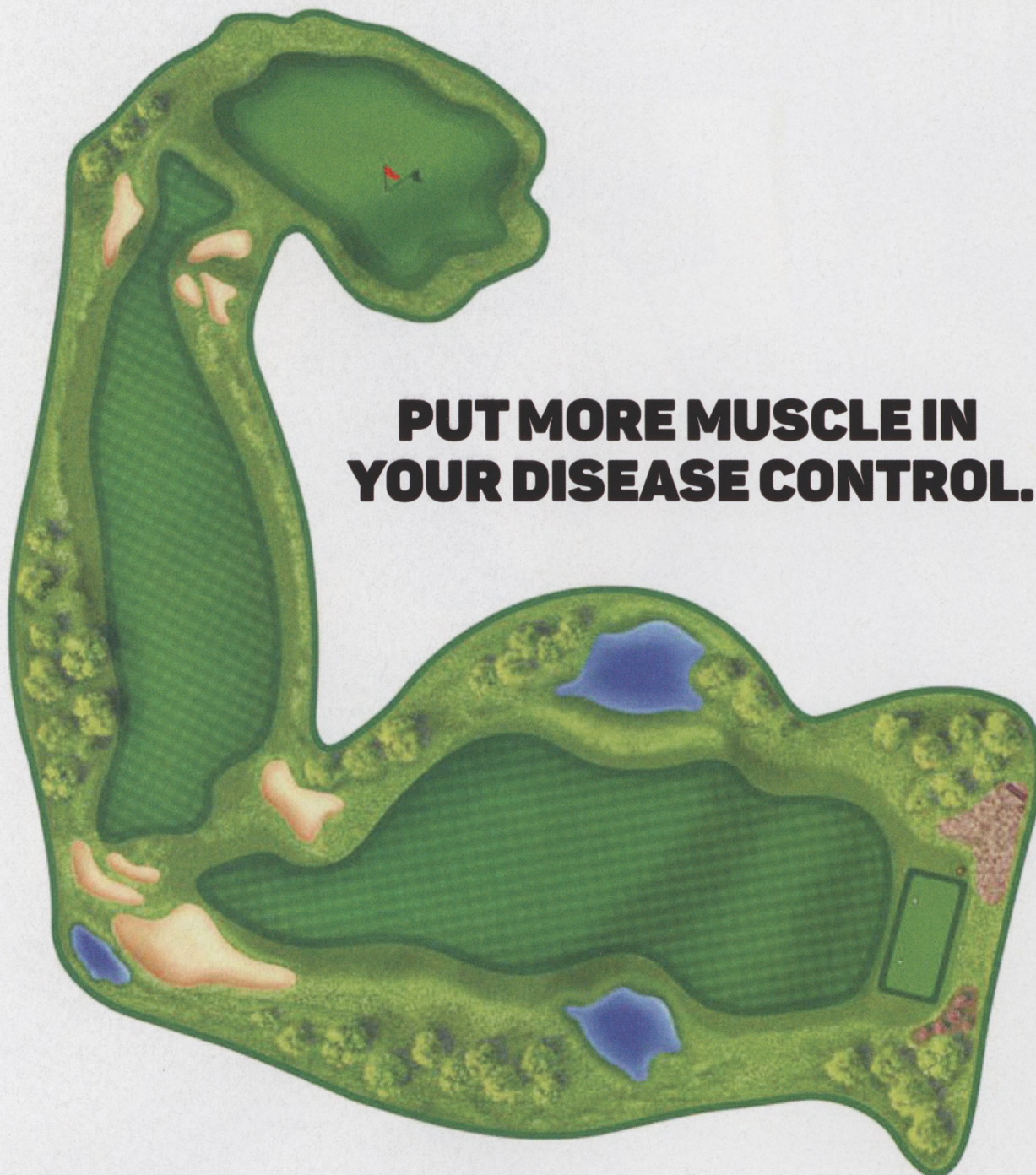
2019 is a much different year for me. I quit complaining about the weather and embraced it, with a quality product to show for it. I spent more time at home enjoying whatever activities my kids want to do. I finally listened to my wife and talked to my doctor about what was going

on inside this head of mine. Depression is real and when treated, can reignite your passion for personal and professional satisfaction. I still have bad days. But knowing there are people out there with the same challenges and struggles that I do helps a lot.

We all know the importance of mentorship and I have been blessed to have a few great ones in my life. My simple reason for sharing this story is with the focus on our mental health in the last couple of years, make sure you have someone like Tom in your life. Someone to discuss ideas and struggles. Someone who has been in your shoes. Someone to kick you in the ass a bit when you need it. It can truly help you along your journey in our industry. If you aren't sure who this could be in your situation, don't overlook subtle hints that are around you. There are many industry veterans in your area that I am sure would relish the chance to mentor the next generation of superintendents. You never know how helpful they can be, like two simple letters hand drawn in wet cement were to me.

Thanks, TZ. GCI

Ryan Cummins is the superintendent at Elcona Country Club in Bristol, Indiana.



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and just getting started

**DR. MIKE FIDANZA HONORS A QUINTET OF LEGENDARY
TURFHEADS WHO CONTINUE TO DISPLAY ZEST FOR THE INDUSTRY.**

Let's drink, raise your glass,

*make a toast to the days that are in
the past.*

*We're never thinking of the bad, we've
had a lot of fun, we're a long way from
done.*

Let's drink, raise your glass,

*'cause wherever we go, that's where
the party's at.*

*We're never thinking of the bad,
we've had a lot of fun, we're a long way
from done.*

– Jon Nicholson

Fifty years is a long time, the “golden anniversary,” but for these turf industry legends, they’re just getting started.

DR. JOSEPH VARGAS

Dr. Joe Vargas was recently honored for 50 years of service as the turfgrass pathologist at Michigan State University. He started there in 1968



▲ Vargas

not long after earning a bachelor's of science from the University of Rhode Island, a Master's of science from Oklahoma State and a doctorate in plant pathology from the University of Minnesota. He has conducted research and guided graduate student research in areas of turf disease management, fungicide resistance, and chemical, biological and genetic turf disease control.

Dr. Karl Danneberger of Ohio State University and Dr. Brandon Horvath of the University of Tennessee are two of his graduate students working in academia, and Dr. Rob Golembiewski and Dr. Paul Giordano, both of Bayer, work in industry. Joe has given presentations for superintendents throughout the U.S. and to greenkeepers in Europe, Asia, Australia, South America and South Africa. His book “Management of Turfgrass Diseases” can be found in many superintendent's office, as well as the *Poa annua* book he co-authored with Dr. Al Turgeon. He also has produced many scientific articles throughout his career at Michigan State.

Joe received the GCSAA Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Award in 1997, the USGA Green Section Award in 2007 and, in

2016, he was inducted into the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame — probably the only turfgrass pathologist in any golf hall of fame. He continues to contribute to the turf industry because he enjoys what he does, evidenced from his recent accomplishment with the release of Flagstick, a creeping bentgrass with resistance to dollar spot.

LEE KOZSEY

Lee Kozsey grew up near Cleveland, but today resides in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Although he has a famous second cousin — former Miami Dolphins coach and NFL Hall of Famer Don Shula — he is better known for the most widely used fungicide in the turf industry.

If you see a vehicle in a parking lot with a license plate that reads DACONIL, it belongs to Lee Kozsey. In 1963, he was working for the Diamond Alkali Company in the laboratory that first synthesized DAC-2787, which is known today as Daconil fungicide. He recalls sleeping in the lab many times, since the chemical reaction took 48 hours to complete. Back then, Lee was elected to the board of the American Chemical Society, Technical Engineers Section, as a result of his work in chemistry research. He eventually shifted gears from research to sales and in 2012 Lee was honored with a 50-year pin from his employer, Syngenta.

Today, Lee represents Syngenta in the Mid-Atlantic region and is always present at conferences, superintendent association meetings, field days and anywhere he can help. In 2010, he was honored by the New Jersey Turfgrass Association for his distinguished career. Lee attributes his long and productive career to working with great people and really enjoying what he does. His advice to young people early in their career? “To be recognizable by what you do,” he says.

GEORGE THOMPSON

George Thompson grew up in Massachusetts and studied under Dr. Joe Troll at the UMass Stockbridge School of Agriculture. George started his first superintendent job at Ravisloe Country Club in Homewood, Illinois in 1962. He then served as superintendent inside the Washington, D.C., Beltway at Columbia Country Club from 1963-82 and the Country Club of North Carolina from 1982 to 2001. Because of his positive impact and influence in the turf industry, George received the GCSAA Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Award in 2000.

Many of his former assistants are superintendents throughout the country. One of his former assistants even leads a turf team in Caribbean. “He is a true gentleman, calm and patient with a scientific mind and the skills to manage people to the best of their ability,” says Damon DiGiorgio, the director of agronomy at Playa Grande Golf and Ocean Club in the Dominican Republic.

After he retired as a superintendent, George launched a second career as the golf course management instructor at Sandhills Community College in Pinehurst, North Carolina. He continues to teach those students and prepare them for a career in turf in the same successful way as he mentored his many assistants on the golf course.

JAMES “SPEEDY” LIPARI

Jim Lipari is better known as



Dr. Joe Vargas was inducted into the Michigan Golf Hall of Fame — probably the only turfgrass pathologist in any golf hall of fame.”



▲ Thompson

"Speedy," and his famous card trick and storytelling has become a staple on the trade show floor at the Golf Industry Show.

He grew up in Easton, Pennsylvania, the son of Sicilian parents that arrived in America through Ellis Island. Jim started working on a golf course in 1941 at age 11, and a football and basketball scholarship enabled him to graduate with a degree in ornamental horticulture from the National Agricultural College (formerly the National Farmers School and now known as Delaware Valley University in Doylestown, Pennsylvania). In basketball, he was the first athlete at the school to score 1,000 points — playing just 12 games per season.

He was working toward a career as a golf course superintendent, but in 1956, he began a 30-year career with TUCO (The Up-John Company), which manufactured Acti-dione fungicide, whose active ingredient is cycloheximide. He worked throughout the country and soon became the West Coast sales manager, with a region from Chicago to the Pacific coastline. He established close friendships with turf industry pioneers Dr. H. Burton Musser of Penn State University, Dr. O.J. Noer of Milorganite, Joe Valentine of Merion Golf Club, Eb Steiniger of Pine Valley Golf Club, Tom Mascaro of West Point Products and many, many more.

In 1985, TUCO left the turf industry and Jim launched a second career from his Thousand Oaks, California, location by forming a company called Speedy Enterprises, which represents manufacturers of golf course maintenance accessories. Although his daughter and son-in-law operate the company today, Jim still drives an average of 1,200 to 1,500 miles per week visiting customers for Speedy Enterprises. He's not slowing down at all.

And what about that card trick? It's called Speedy and it originated

in Louisiana. Jim first performed it during the GCSAA trade show in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 1976, and he's been performing it ever since. He's even won amateur talent contests on cruise ships doing that trick! There isn't anyone he doesn't know, and once he meets you, he'll never forget your name or where you work. An industry rep says, "one of my best days in this business was spent playing a round of golf at Torrey Pines with Speedy." Jim continues to work for Speedy Enterprises because he thoroughly enjoys it and he loves the people in this industry.

MELVIN B. LUCAS

Mel Lucas began working on a golf course in 1957 and is a graduate from turf programs at Penn State University and the University of Massachusetts. He began his career at Homestead Golf & Country Club in Spring Lake, New Jersey, where his father, Melvin Lucas Sr., was golf course superintendent. The majority of Mel's superintendent days were spent on Long Island.

Throughout his career, Mel has always been active with industry associations and served as GCSAA president in 1980. After he retired as a superintendent, he launched a second career as the de facto "turf extension specialist" in Europe, providing sage agronomic advice to greenkeepers throughout the continent. Mel has helped many European greenkeepers further their education through the University of Massachusetts winter turf



Lee Kozsey
has a famous
cousin – Pro
Football Hall
of Fame coach
Don Shula –
but he's better
known for
developing the
most widely-
used fungicide
in the turf
industry."

short course.

He helped the Slovenian Greenkeepers Association launch their annual turf conference, which has a reputation for high quality and impact, and has attracted many participants from the United States. In fact, Mel is an honorary member of the Slovenian Greenkeepers Association, a rare honor bestowed on a very few.

In between consulting activities, Mel has assembled a historical collection of golf course superintendent memorabilia, books, magazines and documents that would rival any library. Mel is always at the Golf Industry Show, and you'll see him

proudly wearing his past-president's jacket. In 2015, Mel received the GCSAA Col. John Morley Distinguished Service Award as a testament to his positive impact in the industry as well as being a great friend to the golf course superintendent.

Dr. Joe Vargas, Lee Kozsey, George Thompson, Jim "Speedy" Lipari and Mel Lucas together have more than 250 years of knowledge, experience and wisdom in the turf industry and in life. They really enjoy what they do, they enjoy the people in the industry, they continue to give back to the industry, and they're just getting started. **GCI**

Dr. Mike Fidanza is a professor of plant and soil science and director of the Center for the Agricultural Sciences and a Sustainable Environment at Penn State Berks in Reading, Pennsylvania.



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Longtime tournament volunteer **Larry Feller** shares perspective after a gifted ticket falls through the cracks.

In the golf industry, we all have opportunities from time to time. Volunteering at a tournament is one of them. As a volunteer, you make certain sacrifices to participate.

- You sacrifice time with your family, employer and other responsibilities for an extended period.
 - You donate countless hours to help make the event special.
 - You incur monetary costs for travel, meals, housing, etc.
- As a volunteer, you also have certain responsibilities:
- You are representing the event so your conduct should be above reproach.
 - You have specific job tasks to complete to the best of your ability. It may be a patron's only opportunity to enjoy this event.
 - You are at the beck and call of the organizers while on property.

As a volunteer, you occasionally receive additional benefits that might include uniforms, meals, housing, the opportunity to return to play the course at a later date, and the opportunity to receive or purchase tickets. As the purchaser of the ticket, the volunteer is ultimately responsible for how the recipient conducts themselves while in possession of the gift. This is where my story begins.

For many years, I have volunteered on the golf course crew for an annual tournament. It has been an honor and privilege to work behind the scenes for this tournament. It has allowed me to develop lifelong friendships with other volunteers from every walk of

life. As a benefit for volunteering, I have had the opportunity to purchase tickets.

Each year, through my employment, I receive numerous requests for tickets to this event. Occasionally, volunteers have traded or sold unused tickets to other volunteers who had additional requests. This past year, in good faith, a fellow volunteer sold me an extra ticket, at face value, that I gave to a trusted colleague. He had received several requests over the years from a Class A superintendent who wanted to attend the tournament with his spouse. After the ticket was in the superintendent's possession, his plans changed. But instead of contacting me or my colleague, the superintendent made the choice to put the ticket on eBay. As a result, the tournament officials identified the "scalped" ticket and cancelled it. They called in my volunteer counterpart for questioning, which ultimately involved me. I immediately called and confronted the superintendent who admitted to having sold the ticket, but the damage was done. After two agonizing months, we learned that we would not be allowed the opportunity to return and play the course, nor would we be allowed to purchase tickets for 2020. Thankfully, because of our efforts to get to the bottom of the issue, we would not lose our opportunity to volunteer in the future. I'm sure the tournament superintendent had a voice in our defense. I hope this story will be a cautionary tale to help others avoid

this type of situation. Here are a few suggestions I think are important to remember.

VOLUNTEERS


- If you choose to give away tournament tickets, make sure you know the recipient.
- Be absolutely confident that this individual will conduct themselves appropriately.
- Make sure they understand that if their plans change and they can't attend, they must return the ticket to you.
- **You are responsible for the whereabouts of the ticket at all times.**
- You should never attempt to sell a ticket online or to a scalper.
- Should you decide to trade or sell your ticket to another volunteer, never sell for more than face value.

RECIPIENTS

- Respect the efforts that have been put forth so you can enjoy the event.
- Never transfer the ticket to anyone without contacting the provider. You should be aware that people are always watching.
- You are now part of an industry that promotes the enjoyment of golf. If you need money, ask for assistance. **Don't sell a ticket!**

As a volunteer, I hope you realize how sensitive this type of issue can be and as a recipient of such a ticket I hope you realize your responsibilities and the repercussions that can come if you conduct yourself in a disrespectful or untrustworthy manner. **GCI**

LARRY FELLER is a territory manager for Syngenta who has served as a volunteer at more than 20 major championships.

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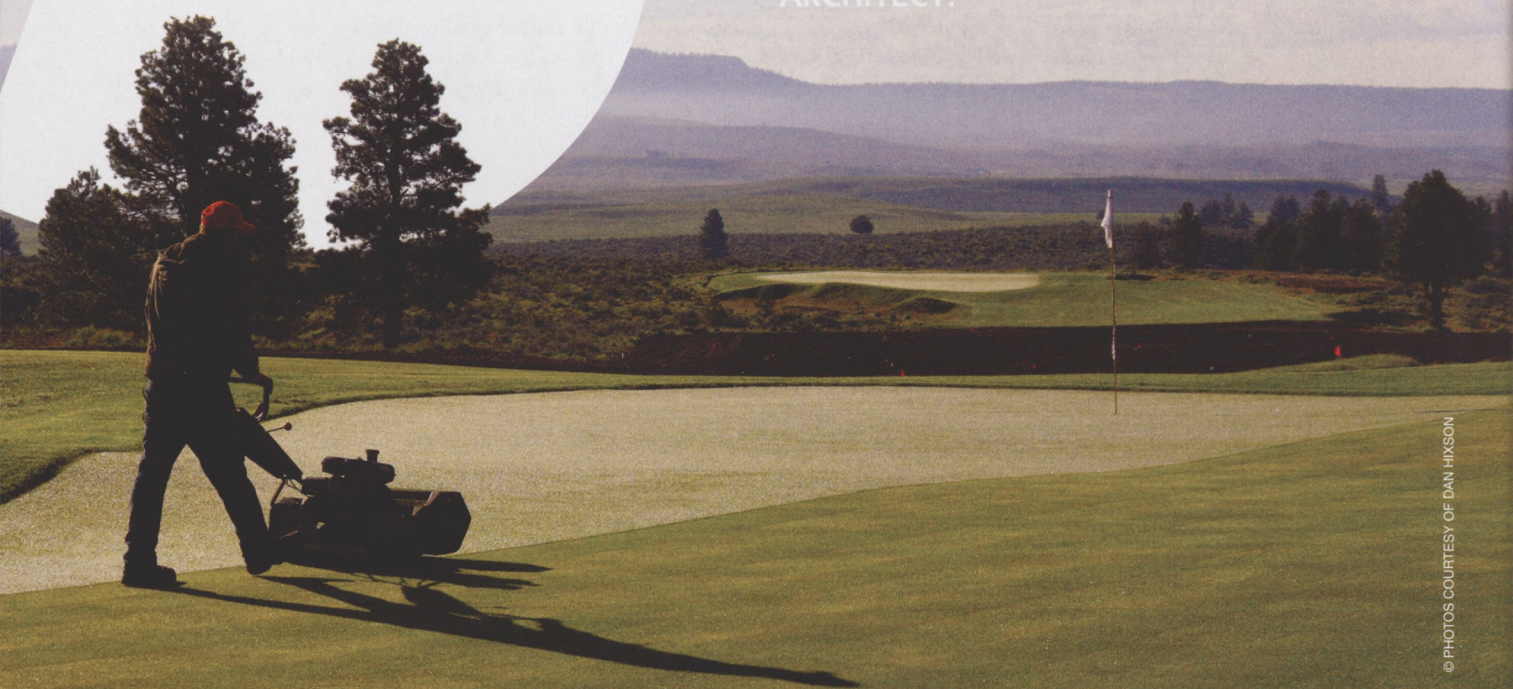
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5 things learned ON A MOWER

DAN HIXSON EXPLAINS HOW
PARTICIPATORY MAINTENANCE
MAKES HIM A BETTER GOLF COURSE
ARCHITECT.



© PHOTOS COURTESY OF DAN HIXSON

This is a small excerpt from my attempt to write a Golf Architecture book titled "A Good Day for a Mow." At my current pace, I expect the completion date to be right around 2026 ... or 2029 ... if at all.

design and build golf courses. Being self-taught, I am always looking for ways to improve at my profession and hope that my future projects will show this, through thoughtful, creative and practical designs. One of the best continuing education activities for me as a designer was surprisingly found on a mower. Studying classic courses, reading books on the subject or even in-depth discussions with others in the trade is rewarding and enlightening, but I seem to learn more cutting grass.

In my early teens, I occasionally walk mowed putting greens and surrounds or pulled a gang-mower behind a tractor on the small 9-hole course where my father was the professional. Much later, I occasionally mowed some fairways during my career as a club professional, for a change of pace and to get out of the shop.

Eventually, mowing some of my own courses has been very eye-opening and certainly one of the more personally satisfying highlights of being in the profession. It produces pride for getting the project to this point. It is also filled with symbolic meanings and gratitude for having the awesome privilege of being able to fulfill a childhood dream of designing and building golf courses. However, it became impossible to not think about this most prevalent element of maintenance and how the design affects it. I do not mean that in the past I forgot about mowing while designing; I think I gave it a lot of consideration, but the "golf" took precedence in design. When I resumed mowing, my never-ending curiosity of golf course design very quickly took over: the aspect of form follows

function and how to make form and function as one is the ultimate.

While the earliest golf courses were groomed by sheep and other livestock, the technology of turf care and agronomic practices has advanced every bit as much as the equipment for playing the game. The mowing that continued education for me happened from the seat of a \$60,000 mower full of electronics, hydraulics and some brilliant engineering with blades sharp enough to shave your face.

Here are my top 5 things I have learned on a mower.

1. BEFORE A SHOVEL HITS THE DIRT, THE FIRST MOW IS THE MOST FUN AND IMPORTANT

On three of my courses, I started the projects by mowing the native vegetation within the future playing corridors. I did this on about half the holes at Bandon Crossings (my first full course) and again recently on six holes on my upcoming project, Callahan Ridge. This is a new 18-hole course I started in March in Roseburg, Oregon. However, 10 years earlier I had far and away the biggest, most fun and thrilling mowing project for me. The project involved starting the process of building reversible Craddock and Hankins courses at the Retreat at Silvies Valley Ranch.

Silvies is a massive 140,000-acre cattle and goat ranch in Eastern Oregon's beautiful high desert. I had finished a rough routing plan and had staked the tees, turn-points and green locations before I started. Then, pulling a 12-foot-wide brush beater with a John Deere tractor, I spent about five days on the property mowing out about 120 acres. The excitement of designing this project could not have been higher for me than during those five days bumping and feeling around, truly discovering every square foot of the property. The land revealed itself to me from

the seat of a tractor, under the 5-foot-tall desert sagebrush. Seeing all these great contours made designing the details of the course relatively easy.

The physical act and time spent mowing the corridors were filled with many stops so I could make quick sketch designs of what I was seeing for eventual course features. In hindsight, this was a huge amount of the process of visualizing each hole that was built to play in both directions. Mow one way and visualize a hole for the Craddock course, turn around and visualize the Hankins course reversed counterpart. That is as fun as it gets on a mower for me!

2. WHY NOT BUILD FEATURES EASIER TO MOW?

A couple months after the completion of my second course, Wine Valley in Walla Walla, Washington, we went back and built five bunkers we had skipped during construction, in order to get everything seeded on schedule. I would rough shape a bunker with a bulldozer in the morning and then someone else with much more talent than I would add details with an excavator and turn it into a better bunker, adding drainage and laying sod — I'll do anything to avoid laying sod. I would then sneak away and jump on a mower. Wine Valley used 5-plex lightweight fairway mowers. Over a week of morning shaping and afternoon mowing, we had finished the five bunkers (and I only laid two pieces of sod!) and I had mowed almost everything on the course. A very successful week indeed.

I consistently found things I wish we had slightly changed that would have made the mowing easier and faster. Wine Valley mostly has short grass around the greens, as well as some very large freeform bunkers with dramatic deep edges. Many of the changes I noticed were small areas that required the operator to make too sharp of a turn or multi-point turns in order to mow every-

◀ The Retreat at Silvies Valley Ranch is a reversible course in Oregon designed by Dan Hixson.



▲ Self-taught golf course architect Dan Hixson relies on mowing as a form of continuing education.

thing. The changes I noticed would not have taken away anything architecturally or even been noticeable.

Based on those findings, I have a series of bunker ideas that will be much easier and faster to mow and have unique shapes as well. I shaped several on the Silvies project, but they didn't seem within the natural look of the project that we sought. Building a golf course that is played in both directions, switched daily, was already radical enough. Staying within the minimalism ethos of the project was more practical than also attempting an experimental bunker style. The Roseburg project will definitely have features throughout that are designed and built with this in mind.

3. HOW TO MOW DURING GROW-IN IS VITAL TO QUALITY TURF

It is extremely important to mow with a gentle touch during grow-in. At Wine Valley, someone on the crew tried to diagonally stripe mow a few fairways early on, only to rip up infant fescue turf near the fairway bunkers. We built the bunkers to have the fairway cut to the bunker edge. We shaped the edges to be mowed easily, with relatively simple

edges that do not require significant turns. Having the operators make multi-point turns up against the bunker put way too much undue stress on the young turf. Soon we were only mowing in straight lines parallel to the bunkers and the turf immediately improved. Obviously, this holds true around greens and tees. I know this is common sense, but it can easily be overlooked — particularly by those who lack grow-in experience or a background of fescue sward.

4. VISUALLY, MOWED GRASS SHOWS CONTOURS FAR DIFFERENTLY THAN BROWN DIRT

One of the more fascinating evolutions of building a golf course for me is seeing the transitions of textures and colors that occur through the entire process. The visual difference of seeing something rough shaped in dirt, then finished smooth, how it looks different once turfed, and finally once it is mowed to its eventual playing height, is a big part of the visualization during construction. Also, the height of cut changes our perception of steepness. A slope with tight mown turf looks much steeper than rough.

Soil and sand tend to be dull and absorbers of light, whereas turfgrass is far more reflective, especially closely mown turf. The shine of sunlight on turf is the reason most of the truly great golf photography is taken in the golden hours early and late each day and somewhat toward the sun. This is also why rough shaped construction photos rarely spark interest in the golfer's imagination, except for those involved. I know this by wanting to show-off progress of my projects to my friends, only to see them wander off, bored stiff of my dirt photos.

5. MOWING BRINGS IT ALL TOGETHER

Having golfers tee it up for the first time on a new course is an ending and a beginning. It is the official end of "course building" and the official beginning of life as a sports playing field: a living, growing and changing landscape, built to play a game on.

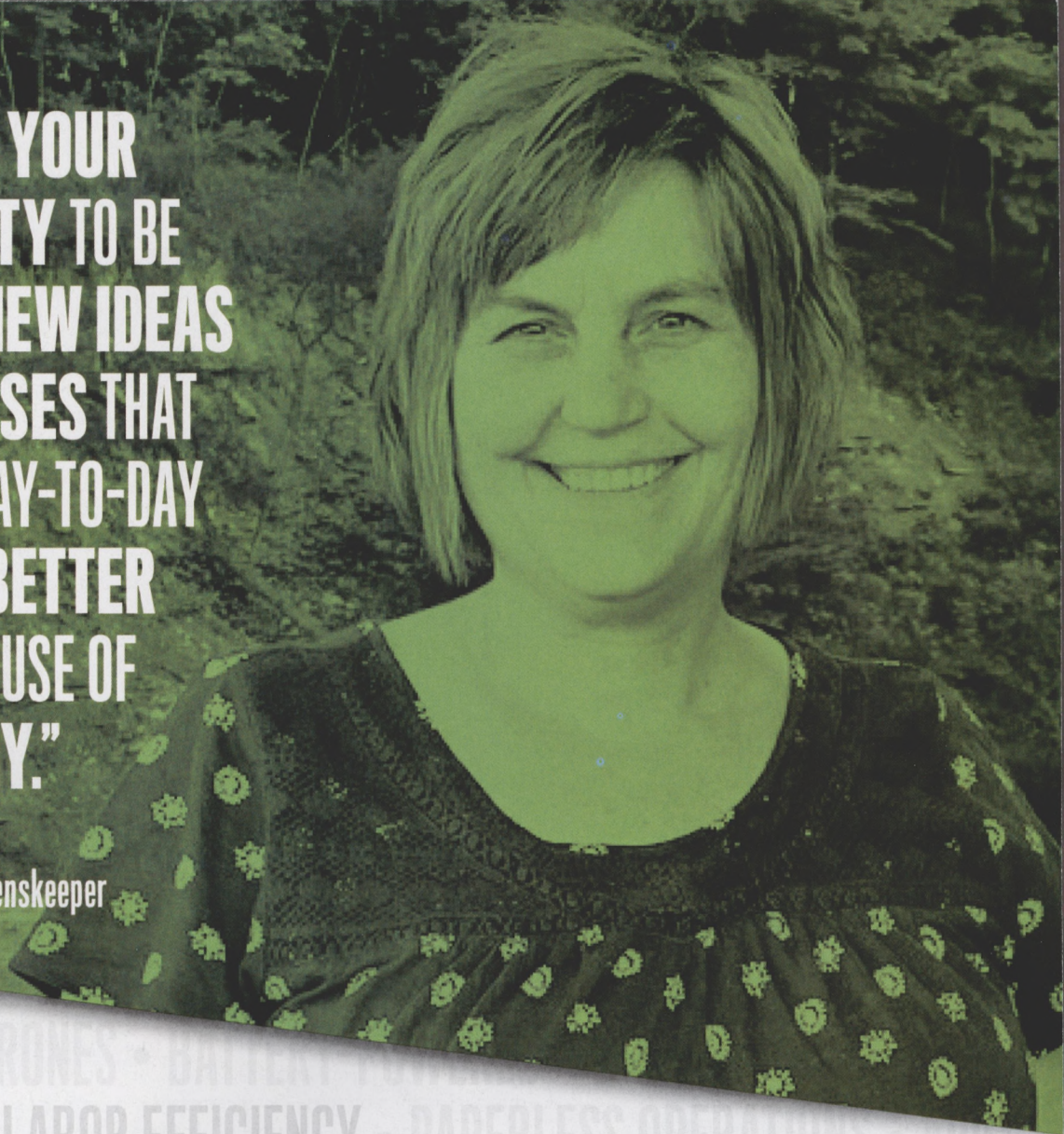
The last mowings before a course's grand opening are the culmination of everything that leads to that point. From the owner's original idea, to mapping, drawing, permitting, staking, clearing, shaping, draining, irrigating, finishing, seeding and finally mowing ... it's when, suddenly, the course comes to life. I have been lucky to have mown at the beginning of a project before it is a course and at the beginning of when it first becomes a golf course. I believe each has helped me improve in my profession of a golf course designer. I think we as designers can never be thankful enough of those superintendents and crew members who work every day to prepare and present our courses for golfers to enjoy this wonderful game.

Bottom line: The more I mow, the better I design. At the end or the beginning. **GCI**

Dan Hixson is a Pacific Northwest-based golf course architect. Follow him on Instagram @hixsongolfdesign.

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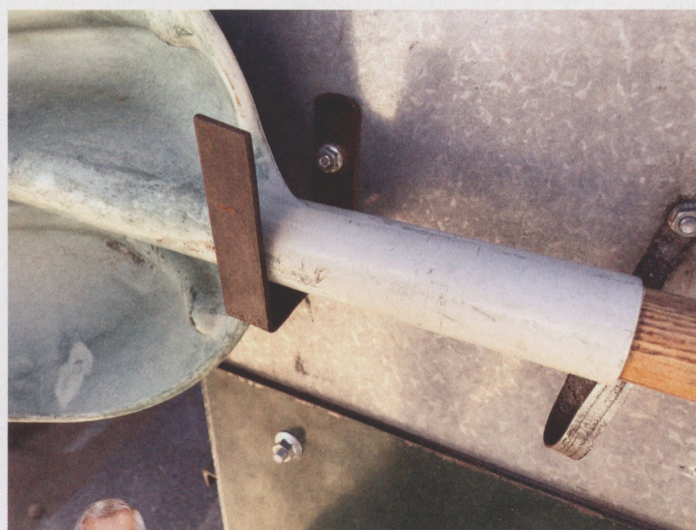
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Globetrotting consulting agronomist **Terry Buchen** visits many golf courses annually with his digital camera in hand. He shares helpful ideas relating to maintenance equipment from the golf course superintendents he visits — as well as a few ideas of his own — with timely photos and captions that explore the changing world of golf course management.

TOPDRESSER SHOVEL

Cleaning up small quantities of spilled topdressing sand is convenient and quite easy with this shovel holder mounted on the front of a Turfco CR-10 Large Area Topdresser and Material Handler. The Ames Scoop Shovel is mounted on 1-inch by 1/8-inch steel strapping (already in inventory), bent into the proper shape with a torch, that is then bolted into existing holes. The owner's manual, which was formerly hooked into the two straps adjacent to the shovel handle, is now in the equipment manager's office file cabinet. Glenwild Golf Club and Spa director of agronomy Michael J. Valiant, CGCS, and equipment manager Robert "Skip" Rose in Park City, Utah, provided this great idea.



Terry Buchen, CGCS, MG, is president of Golf Agronomy International. He's a 41-year, life member of the GCSAA. He can be reached at 757-561-7777 or terrybuchen@earthlink.net.



ROTARY SPREADER STORAGE

An octet of the 2000SR Stainless Steel Rotary Spreaders from The Andersons are efficiently stored on the wall of this dedicated fertilizer storage room. 12 lineal feet of 1-inch square tubing is cut into pieces and welded onto 18 lineal feet by 4-inch by 1/4-inch flat steel plate that is mounted with concrete anchors into the cinder block wall. The "L" shaped handle-holders are spaced 8 inches apart and there are 17 inches of separation between each set of handles. Materials cost about \$160 and it took about half a day to cut, fabricate, weld and mount. Golf course superintendent Darren J. Davis, CGCS, and equipment manager Guillermo Gomez are a great team at the Olde Florida Golf Club in Naples, Florida. Davis was the 82nd president of the GCSAA. **GCI**

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Lastly speaking

OK, kids, gather round and let's talk one last time about why this is the greatest business in the world.

First, this thing you do ... it's hopelessly inadequate to call it "golf course maintenance." You are highly professional managers of what are, in many cases, incredibly valuable urban greenspaces. Economically, environmentally and socially, these swatches of earth and plants you care for really do matter. Each one is a gigantic community asset. Never take that for granted.

Sure, there is the daily grind of being overtasked and understaffed. And there's the nagging feeling that golfers just don't get it. But few of you lose sleep waiting for that rare compliment from a member. Most of you do the job for yourselves, I think. The instant gratification of seeing lasers mown, edges perfected, bunkers looking just so. And then there are those moments when you're alone on the course and – just for a second or two – you allow yourself to feel genuine pride in this fabulous thing you've helped to create. Sound familiar?

I've lost track of how many times I've heard the same "origin story" from supers who took a summer job on a course and then were unexpectedly smitten by the beauty and allure of it. In many cases, you were astounded to find out it was an actual career and they taught it in college. I've always thought it was telling how many of you said that same damned thing when I asked how you got into this crazy business.

Another commonality: A healthy fixation on making this giant living thing you're in

“One of the huge differences between good greenkeepers and great ones is the burning desire to make Baby better than last year.”

charge of better and healthier than it was when you started. One of the huge differences between good greenkeepers and great ones is the burning desire to make Baby better than last year. Even if players don't really notice those little touches, you do ... and it makes you smile a little every time you see them.

And that, of course, is why passion is mandatory. No one reading this is likely to get rich or famous doing what you do. Thus, you do it because you love it (and hate it) and can't imagine not doing it (and constantly think about quitting). It's often struck me that you seem to be having a tumultuous affair with your own job. It's been crazy fun to watch that over the decades.

You find camaraderie with nearly everyone who does what you do. Years ago, I started borrowing from Harvey Penick's famous line and saying, "If you grow grass, you are my friend." I think that's true for many of y'all. It's a tiny, weird world yet those of us who have been welcomed into it are loath to ever leave.

And you find people to love by the boatload in this community. And now I'm crying ... so let's wrap this up.

This is my last column for *Golf Course Industry* and the official end of my time on the team. I'm very, very lucky I got to work with awesome people like Mike Zawacki,

Jim Blayney, Russ Warner and Guy Cipriano, and friends like Tim Moraghan and Henry DeLozier who contributed amazing ideas in every issue.

I'm also beyond grateful that 10 years ago this month, GIE Media's founder, Richard Foster, pointed me gently toward sobriety. With that came more blessings and joy than I could describe in a million columns.

As for this space, it is time to vacate the premises for a new tenant. I hope I used it to inform, enlighten, irritate, amuse and provoke you along the way. That said, please know how much your kind words about this column have meant to me over the years. Thank you, each and every one of you, for taking the time to read this nonsense.

(By the way, be assured I'm not retiring from writing. That would be like retiring from breathing for me.)

So, what's next? I honestly don't know at the moment. As Robert Burns said, "The best-laid plans of mice and men often go awry." I remain a hopeless optimist, but a little dose of humility was good for my soul.

One thing I'm not humble about: I'm a proud honorary turfhead and I'm never leaving this business. It's way too much fun and there are too many great stories left to tell. The next couple of decades are going to be a fabulous time in our happy little industry. It's going to be a smarter, savvier, better market ... and I can't wait to be part of it.

Wishing peace, joy and boundless love to all of you. **GCI**



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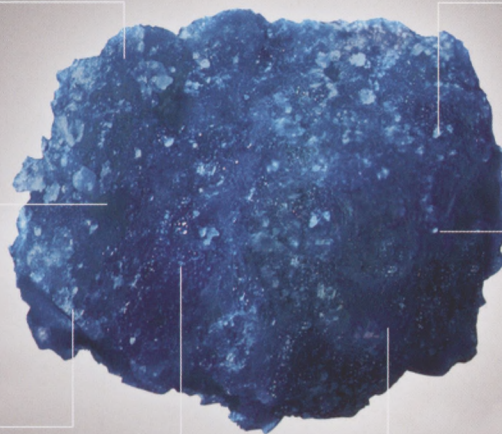
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